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# Journal of Synagogue Music

Vol. 26 No. 1 — Spring/Summer 1999

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# Editorial Remarks

*Hazzan Dr. Scott M. Sokol*

*Hazzan Neil Blumofe*

We are extremely pleased to bring you at long last this issue of *The Journal of Synagogue Music*. The past several months have seen a great deal of activity surrounding the Journal, but as always we found that *הזמן קצר והמלאכה מרובה*. We apologize for the delays of this first run and hope that in the future we will be able to present the Journal in a more timely fashion.

Taking on the enormous job of editing this journal has been eased by the contributions of a wonderful editorial board and several individuals who have provided guidance and support. In this regard, we would like to thank in particular Hazzanim Robert Scherr and Stephen Stein. Also, we would again like to acknowledge for his past contributions Hazzan Eric Snyder.

We hope that in reading this issue you will find the best of what we have inherited from our predecessors as well as something novel. Our cover, as you can see, has been redesigned by a talented graphic artist Florette Kupfer, who borrowed from another of the publications of the Cantors Assembly, Israel Alter's seminal *The Sabbath Service*. The type style and layout has been ably produced by Andrew Greene.

And now a few words about the structure of the journal. Recognizing that many different types of material should comprise a publication aimed at the professional hazzan, we have reinstituted departments in the Journal's organization. The four departments are Articles (longer



scholarly pieces on a range of subjects), Notes (shorter articles, professional notes or previously produced papers/presentations such as bulletin articles), Reviews (of both music and books) and New Music (short works written by or for the chazzan not elsewhere published). We will also include a Letters section in future issues, as needed.

In this issue, you will find a scholarly article on the possibilities of exegesis based on the Masorettes by Hazzan Neil Blumofe. Hazzan Robert Scherr shares with us his experiences while on sabbatical at the Harvard Divinity School. Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman, a new member of our editorial board, relates a fascinating story on the altering of a text of a well-known choral work. Hazzan Scott Sokol has transcribed a sermon given this past *Shabbat Shirah* on collective and individual memory as seen through biblical and liturgical texts. Hazzan Eugene Rosner presents a new concert piece he has written based on the Pesach piyut *Tsena Ur'ena*. Another new piece is a setting of Psalm 104 commissioned by Congregation Agudas Achim of Austin, Texas. Finally, we have three reviews, one of a setting of *Ki K'shimcha* and two of recent books. Taken together, we hope you will find this a enjoyable mix for the cantorial palette.

We have already begun collecting material for our forthcoming issue. This issue will be dedicated to the memory of our departed colleague and dear friend Hazzan Joshua Gluckstern-Reiss.

Details on the form for future submissions is found on the next page.

## Editorial Board

*Hazzan Dr. Scott M. Sokol: Editor*

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

*The Journal of Synagogue Music* publishes articles, notes and music of broad interest to the hazzan and other Jewish musical professionals. Articles of any length will be considered; however, the typical paper will be between 1000 and 10,000 words. *The Journal of Synagogue Music* is peer-reviewed by its editorial board and occasionally outside reviewers when necessary.

Submissions should be sent to either Hazzan Neil Blumofe or Hazzan Scott Sokol. Two typed hard-copies should be sent along with an electronic copy (on disk or as an e-mail attachment to [nblumofe@aol.com](mailto:nblumofe@aol.com) or [cantsokol@aol.com](mailto:cantsokol@aol.com)). We can accept most electronic formats including Word for Mac or IBM (IBM preferred), Word-perfect, Dagesh or Davkewriter. Musical submissions should be sent as high-quality camera-ready copy (formatted for a 6"-by-9" page) or as a Finale or MIDI file. (Finale is the preferred format.) Please contact Scott Sokol for any additional questions regarding format for submissions.

# The Golden Bell

The Converging of Melody and the Word, Including a Case Study Examining Masoretic Influence

*Hazzan Neil Blumofe*

האותיות יוצאות בדרכי הנתיבות בדרכי הניגון וזהו סוד טעמי התורה לפי  
שהם נכנסים ויוצאים בקול השיר....

The letters go out in the pathways through the way of music, and this is the secret of the cantillation accents [טעמים] of the Torah, for they come in and go out with the sound of singing. The secret of this is the golden bell and pomegranate with which the High Priest used to enter the Holy of Holies, so that its sound may be heard. From this you will be able to understand the secret of the Holy Spirit which resides in prophets in the manner of music.<sup>1</sup>

*A living history is sung by telling its melody*

—Antonio Machado

## INTRODUCTION; AN EXPEDITION

Spanning the West and the East there are many different musical traditions and a spectrum of thresholds of interpreting and participating in

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Hazzan Neil Blumofe serves Congregation Agudas Achim in Austin, Texas.

the constant discovery of the oral tradition. Using the universal grammar and function of the טעמים buoyed by Masoretic transmission and influence, a general sense of a constant oral tradition may be inferred. There is no Ur-tradition of melody that existed during the redaction of the sacred texts, however with the accurate and faithful recording of the *Masorah*, a piecemeal application may be ventured to complement written tradition.

Taking the complementary function of oral tradition via the Masoretes a step further, oral tradition may be seen on its own as a legitimate and powerful adjunct to the religious written tradition. The Book of איכה is a fine example of regulated written forms and a good sampling of Masoretic influence. Chapter Three in particular is unique in the sacred canon in that it represents a deviation from the standard scriptural forms of transmission. The chapter has a metrical tune superimposed on it, which aids the recitation, in fact subsuming the traditional role of the טעמים. In the following discussion, a commingling of the oral tradition (טעמים and appropriate folktune) with the sacred written word (the largely accepted version of the sacred text), is drawn out and explained using איכה as a prototype.

#### TOWARDS AN ORAL FORMULA OF איכה: ELUCIDATING THE POETIC AND READING THE ABC'S OF MEANING; A CASE STUDY

#### WRITING AS ORGANIZED THOUGHT COUPLED WITH SOUND

The idea of deriving specific contemporary meaning from a trans-generational sacred text requires a continuous tradition of interpretative symbols and a logic of deduction and analysis. Historically, oral musical traditions were not recorded. Not until the recording and transcription of folk music in the beginning of the twentieth century by Parry, Lord, Bartok, Vardapet and Idelsohn among others, did the power of the word and its transmission surface as a viable and indeed, authentic way of uncovering meaning and elucidating a powerful cultural subtext behind the written text.

There is linguistic value in the word as standing for an idea, in



particular as the signifier in a signifier/signified relationship.<sup>2</sup> Language and its patterns are also used to reconstruct the mythology and religion of ancient civilizations. However, there are finite limits to the type of information language can provide: uncertainty of etymology and loan-words, for example.

Indeed, the influence and supremacy of the written tradition has masked the intellectual power of orally preserving a text through time. In the telling, or recitation of a text, the designation as "sacred" for a written text makes the words unchanging and fixed. Fixed phrases are listed in their surface structure form and are not allowed to undergo syntactic changes or other transformations, thereby becoming bound phrases (Kiparsky, 1976). Albert Lord employed a method of inference that illustrated that in epic poetry, fixed phrases or certain images act as catalysts for the performer, or reminders (mnemonics) for the rest of transmission (Lord, 1965). In *איכה*, especially Chapter Three, there is a tendency for the music to act precisely in this way as an aural representation and stimulation.

#### POSSIBLE WRITTEN CLUES TO ORAL TRANSMISSION

Using the Masorah system as a device to help order and explain the text of the *תנ"ך* in general and the book of *איכה* in particular is a relatively rediscovered field of interpretation. The discipline of reading and applying the Masorah encourages analysis of the text from a variety of perspectives: orthographic, morphological, literary, intertextual, religious/historic, and syntactical, to name a few. In its basic form, the Masorah attempts to preserve a uniform (traditional) transmission of a text, which has become sacred and therefore unchanging. The codification of the text as holy writ thus becomes the foundation of later exegesis, (scholarly or theological) and an established written authority of the text is the preëminent method of later dissemination or interpretative debate (Freedman/Cohen, 1974). In part, the Masorah has systemized the oral tradition, incorporating ciphers and symbols into a written language, ordering grammar and pronunciation and preserving in clear markings a method of legislating the sacred text which

was formerly an oral tradition established and ratified throughout the generations.

Scholars discern three schools of Masoretes: Tiberian, Palestinian, and Babylonian which were competing systems of recording notes and signs used for both the accents (טעמים), and the vowels (Yeivin, 1980). Early in its development the Tiberian Masoretic system became the accepted system and the authoritative basis on which later commentators would rely. Within the Tiberian tradition, there were various other practices which marginally differed from one another (Kelley, 1998). Scholars have different names for these other systems calling them the Expanded Tiberian system, the Tiberio-Palestinian system, or more frequently the Tiberian Non-Receptus system (Goshen-Gottstein, 1963) or the Non-Conventional Tiberian system (Dotan, 1971). The goal of the Masoretic system was to ensure uniformity in the writing of the letters of the text, the identification of the words represented, and their relationships, as indicated by the written representation of the reading tradition (Freedman, 1998).

Considering איכה specifically, the variety of techniques of Masoretic analysis can be directly applied to explicate and elucidate the text and even its placement in the Biblical canon. In the macro ideal of interpreting texts, a primary consideration is the open and closed sections of the text, codified in the Masoretic order as פתוחות and סתומות, respectively (Ginsburg, 1966). The fundamental definition of both being that the פתוחות, designated by a פ starts on the line of the text while the סתומות, regarded by a ס, starts in the middle of the line. It is interesting to note that איכה has סתומות between the verses and פתוחות only to open the chapter divisions (the exception being chapter one). However, this pattern is broken in the fifth chapter after verse 18 where there is a פתוחה.<sup>3</sup>

Another Masoretic division in the written text is the classification of סדרים. To be sure, the tradition of these divisions differs from the Christian divisions of chapters which import for the ideal of reference became chapter and verse designations codified in the 13th century by Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury. איכה, in its five chapter divisions, is considered by the Masoretes to be only one סדר.

The final overarching mode of Masoretic division, common to the entire Biblical canon is that of verses, characterized by a סלוק, or a סוף פסוק, which by definition, marks the end of a verse. There is a further division in the middle of the text indicated by an אתנחתא which serves as pause or minor division in the overall recitation of the text. It is impossible to say whether these symbols (tropes) exclusively served a grammatical or a musical function, or if there was an overlap of application and a converging of influences resulting in a medial function for these differing traditions. There are no differences in any manuscripts regarding the number of verses, given to be 154, and the middle of the book arriving at verse 3:34 (Ginsburg, 1966).

Therefore on the macro-level of analysis, we can benefit from these three modes of parametric interpretation: the סתומות and the פתוחות, the סדרים, and the construction of the verses (אתנחתא/סלוק).<sup>4</sup>

In applying specific diacritical requisites as well as the overall diagnostic as outlined above, the Masorah of איכה can be divided into three subsections of analysis:

1. Pronunciation tactics: scribal guidelines; כתיב/קרי
2. Constructing Rules of Grammar: The post-mnemonic and the fluxive Oral Tradition
3. Irregularities in the Oral Tradition: tropal accents/musical notations (טעמים)

Each section will be remarked upon, using specific examples from איכה based on the methods of reference and the annotated glossary developed by Kelley, Mynatt, and Crawford. However, the classifications and the subsections are originally developed.

#### PRONUNCIATION TACTICS: SCRIBAL GUIDELINES; כתיב/קרי

The Masorah links איכה 2:6 and 3:8 to the larger tradition of writing a ש to represent a ס. "This note reflects an early stage in the formation of the Hebrew text, a stage during which the use of ס seems to have been more widespread than at a later stage, when ס was slowly replaced by ש." (Kelley, 1998, cf. Masorah Magna (Mm) 1411).

Additionally, another Masoretic note affecting pronunciation oc-

curs at 3:19. Here the form (imperative form, second masculine singular) is *וְזָר* which occurs instead of *וְזָרָה*. The word is joined by a maqqef to the following word. Although in modern pronunciation the difference is minimal, there seems to be a basis for a verbal difference at one time.<sup>5</sup>

There are two places in *איכה* where the Masoretes notice that what is written as two words should be read as one. In this notation there is a competing difference between what was recorded in a written form and what has been remembered as an oral tradition.<sup>6</sup>

Another method of distinguishing between written and spoken traditions is *כתיב/קרי* (lit. "written [thus], but read [thus]").

According to Kelley:

This formula (*כתיב/קרי*) indicates places where a consonantal form in the text has been judged to be incorrectly written and has been corrected on the adjacent margin, in which case the intended pronunciation of the form on the margin has been indicated by the vowels supplied to the form in the text. In critical terminology, the supposedly corrupt form appearing in the text is called the *כתיב*, while the proposed marginal emendation is known as the *קרי*, indicated by ק placed beneath the emendation (Kelley, 1998).

A specific example is found in *איכה* 4:3, where the text reads (*כתיב*) *בְּעֵינַיִם* and the Masorah has a *קרי*, indicating one to read *בְּעֵינַיִם*. An example of a *כתיב/קרי* that does not apply to two words pronounced as one occurs also in *איכה* 4:3. Here the text has *תִּנָּחַן* and the Masorah records that one should read *תִּנָּחַם*.<sup>7</sup>

The obvious implication of the *כתיב/קרי* affects pronunciation. When publicly declaiming a sacred text, accuracy becomes vital as the precentor must chant without mistake for the hearers in the assembled community; the accurate rendering of the text is paramount to preserving the holiness and the rigor of the holy written tradition. To deviate from the text in this way allows for the possibility of a loose transmission and potential loss of the governing strength of the religion. For indeed, if the *תנ"ך* became a mere book, to be stripped of its sacredness in its unchanging role as the keystone of a faith, then the legitimacy of



the religion and the preservation for any consecrating purpose would be called into question. To supplant the plasticity of the oral tradition by substituting the supremacy of the written text demands that the written text is inviolate to champion a true holiness code.

#### CONSTRUCTING RULES OF GRAMMAR: THE POST-MNEMONIC AND THE FLUXIVE ORAL TRADITION

There is a Masoretic note emphasizing the word עמים in איכה 1:18 to show that this is one of thirteen examples in Biblical literature of a missing ה (a definite article) at the beginning of words (Mm 1856). The reader may insert it, at variance to what is the written form, in a recitation. This Masoretic comment may indicate strains of different redactions. Scribal guidelines may be linked with rules for pronunciation, as noticed above (especially קרי/קרי). The written word and the traditions surrounding its recording were developing in an arena of competing tensions of canonical development. In this context, the text displaced the voice as the primary means of expression. Written language and poetic forms developed and the spoken word is in a sense coöpted and becomes a mode of writing.<sup>8</sup> This subsumption of (declaimed) speech into poetry offers "a kind of errancy of language opposing the dominion of voice" (Gellrich, 1995). Truly, later rabbinic and Jewish culture, descending from an exclusive Wisdom tradition, was a culture that was overwhelmingly based on the written word. An examination of orality built with formulaic response blocks (as shown above), and imbued with devices of rhetoric extends the links of concomitance between the developing oral and written traditions.<sup>9</sup>

The Masoretic note מיד for איכה explains that there are fifteen unusual words at the beginning of verses in the Bible. Kelley states that,

they are unusual because each occurs only once in the Bible in the form without the conjunction ו and in the beginning of the verse. There are other occurrences of these words with conjunction ו at the beginning of verses, and there are other occurrences within

verses both with and without conjunctions 1.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps this is a Masoretic symbol signifying a mnemonic device. Conceivably this is what remains in the text of an older oral history tradition; having the text act as a mnemonic (assigning to the text what is a basic tropal function). This note perhaps alerted the reciters of text to the uniqueness of the passage and was a literary proto-Midrashic commentary. As in oral tradition, catch-words certainly link the verses intermurally (Lord, 1965) and are also a major feature of the diagnostic of the written tradition, so particular attention and purpose of individual words intramurally (within verses) would also figure in the full tradition of recording and receiving Masoretic tradition (Kelley, 1998).

This concept is further explained in the Masoretic symbol סִמָּן.<sup>11</sup> There are three distinctions for the referent mark, סִמָּן: 1. mnemonic excerpts preceding the chapter and verse divisions designed to promote a system of reference for the Biblical passages. 2. mnemonic sequences that alerted the copyist of the text and the reader to the prescribed order of the words in the text, and 3. Aramaic mnemonics, an artificial construction of sentences as a means of remembering the location of the occurrences constituting the topic of a Masoretic note, written in the Masorah Magna. Each word in the sentence represented a biblical verse in which an occurrence was found of the targeted Hebrew verses.

#### IRREGULARITIES IN THE ORAL TRADITION: TROPAL ACCENTS/MUSICAL NOTATIONS (טעמים)

There are different Masoretic traditions, that reflect alternative schools of preserving notes on the sacred, written text, named either "Emendations of the Scribes," or "Euphemisms of the Scribes." The latter title points to the belief that the text was never emended. According to this view, preserving a static written form, the text always expressed itself euphemistically, meaning something it did not actually state. Put another way, the text was always uncovered, giving the sense of hiddenness, but truly the mask of written form was only misinterpreted, even

if the words were corrected in a Masoretic list. In the preëminence of the dogma of the written word, the text escapes casualty, as the doxology of the word ascends past human fallibility. The strength of the text becoming divine overcomes any variant or alternative interpretation of the sublime ideal.

McCarthy argues that some of the *Tiqqune Sopberim*<sup>12</sup> were, in fact, authentic emendations, and in the restrictive climate of canonizing an authoritative and standard written text, not all of the authorities or redactors sanctioned or recognized the emendatory activity (McCarthy, 1976). Further, since the activity of emendation was somewhat concealed, McCarthy argues that it was ripe for corruption.<sup>13</sup>

An example of the *Tiqqune Sopberim* in אִיכָה occurs in 3:20 with the word as marked in the text, נִפְשִׁי, and the marking for its emendation, נִפְשָׁךְ (Cf. BHS, 3 20b, *Tiq soph* 7). If authentic, this is an obvious deviation from a certain written tradition.

The Masoretic examples that follow show instances of scribal conventions and guidelines. In 3:42, the Masoretic note is פֶּת, which is an abbreviation for פֶּתוֹ, indicating that for the word נִפְתָּח, this is one of two occurrences with the patah vowel (The other being Numbers 32:32).<sup>14</sup>

Further, Sperber finds that on two occasions in אִיכָה, there are pausal forms not only on the אֶתְנַחֲמָה and the סוּף פִּסּוּק 3:53 and 3:35 finds the pausal form of the word on the disjunctive trope, זָקָפָא קָטָן (Sperber, 1943).

Exploring the purpose and task of tropes, or טַעֲמִים, plays a major role in Masoretic literature. To date, there is no scholarly answer as to why the phenomena or Masoretic attention to detail occur. We have seen above, that it is a characteristic of the Masoretes to preserve a minority opinion, and we may have in this instance the recording of an oral tradition, now lost to us.<sup>15</sup>

We have seen a broad spectrum of the influence of the Masoretes, both in innovation and in receiving and preserving tradition. Using the Masorah, one may find traditions beneath the received Masoretic systems (pre- or proto- Masoretic), which may help to rediscover an oral tradition, or at least ways of transmitting the written text, and

ways of exploring how the written text became a sacred, unchanging ideal. Concentrating on *איכה*, we have seen many ways in which the Masorah has come alive and help not only to explain the text of *איכה*, but also to link it to the rest of the Bible, through actual textual analysis and through a Midrash received through text studies. Less common forms are preserved by the Masoretes giving them the moniker, "The Wonderful Democracy of the Masoretes."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the Masoretes originally explored and settled a world of interpretation that has forced later scholarship to be aware of the diverse and broad avenues of pursuit in trying to recover the particular fine jewels of redaction and continuance in the received tradition of the oral and written modes of Bible study. *איכה* incorporates many different examples of Masorah that provide a strong introduction to the labyrinthine depths of not only Masorah-studies, but also to the capsules of time when scholarship was not as mindful or versed in the nuances of congenital tradition.

#### THE TAXONOMY OF POETIC THINKING

To reflect on language thus demands that we enter into the speaking of language in order to take up our stay with language (i.e. within its speaking not within our own)... that language will call to us from there and grant us its nature.

—Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*

The recovery of the Biblical text is difficult since a modern reader cannot recognize rhetorical traditions and poetic forms that contribute to the beauty of the text. To reconstruct an oral tradition is nearly impossible in that there are no recorded voices or viable existing traditions. Even the *טעמים* are silent when it comes to actual declaiming practices (Avenary, 1978). In speaking of the oral tradition, one can base at least initial speculation of reconstruction on regaining orality through a comparative study with Homer. According to the Parry-Lord theory, Homer was an oral poet who could not read or write, a real man who composed in performance on the basis of inherited linguistic and narrative patterns. However, the scholar Gregory Nagy



describes Homer rather than a real person, a symbol for the oral tradition, whose mutability is reflected in the textual tradition, which contains variants. The poems themselves were not written by a single author, rather they came to shape over a duration of eras (Nagy, 1996).

Oral poetry composed in performance is always something new, and there is no fixed text; but a written text is a fixed text. A written text is no longer oral poetry, nor subject to the rules that govern the generation of oral poetry, although it began as such. Even the memorization of a text, where the text is fixed but the performance varies does not qualify as an oral poetic tradition. Oral poets are not literate, according to the Parry-Lord model, or if they become literate, they do not depend on writing for the creation or performance of their song.<sup>17</sup>

The song becomes sound-symbolism for the ideal of the word. The song can only enhance the power of emotion already inherent in the words and message of the song. The conceptual symbols of the words become further explained by distinctive musical elements. Too often we encounter what is spoken or read only as the residue of a speaking long past. With additional tools and an expanded vocabulary of what is language (text *and* its transmission), we may be able to recall an intended message, or at least further explain our idea of the mythic ideal—to reinvigorate our scholarly learning, redressing it with a renewed dread of our doxologies.

The philosopher George Santayana writes,

The stuff of language is words, and the sensuous material or words is sound; if language therefore is to be made perfect, its materials must be made beautiful by being themselves subjected to a measure, and endowed with a form. It is true that language is a symbol for intelligence rather than a stimulus to sense, and accordingly the beauties of discourse which commonly attract attention are merely the beauties of the objects and ideas signified. . . . The highest form of euphony is song; the singing voice gives to the sounds it utters the thrill of tonality. . . . This kind of euphony and sensuous beauty, the deepest that sounds can have we have almost wholly surrendered in our speech. . . . So the art of singing is now in the same plight as that of sculpture,—an abstract and conventional

thing surviving by force of tradition and of an innate but now impotent impulse, which under simpler conditions would work itself out into the proper forms of those arts. The truest kind of euphony is thus denied to our poetry.

### A MUSICAL HERMENEUTIC OF *איכה*, CHAPTER 3

On psalmody: There are variant musical traditions for the recitation of chapter three of *איכה*. Due to the regular meter and the consistency of the parallelism, metrical tunes have arisen in both the Western and Hasidic (folk) musical tradition, employing a restricted range of notes and a logocentric core; that is the words dominant the music rendition. This is evidence that the music arose later to fit the earlier, written, unchanging, (written) tradition. The tune, which differs from the cantillation tradition employed for the other four chapters, is meant to be repeated for the entire third chapter. The melody recorded in the Western music tradition has a range of five notes and is to be chanted in the same manner for all sixty-six verses (Baer, 1883). The Hasidic version, as recorded by the Karliner Rebbe, has musical notation for three verses, implying a switch to the first verse again after every third verse; thereby a total of twenty-two complete cycles. This music is a composite whole and may be representative of a extant tune (Wohlberg/Mayer, 1994).

Certainly the transcription of these two representative tunes indicate a retooling of the musical tradition that was recorded in the nineteenth century (when the traditions were developed is another matter entirely, one that depends on accurate dating of material transcribed after original transmission), to interpret sacred text. The latitude of employing a wider diagnostic in recitation, not relying exclusively on the strict rules of cantillation, but recognizing the poetics of Biblical verse and building an animating and vital culture around the unchanging word, was due to the art of living fully in a rich and accommodating traditional legacy and a sensitive awareness of different and alternative modes of expression.<sup>18</sup>

Chapter three of *איכה* in its dramatization has shifts in the speaker

which indicates confusion in that there are different/multiple points of view. The rhythm deliberately shifts as accents and syncopations are not fitted in a uniform pattern. Irrespective of scholarly debate, the text transcends its original locus and becomes a sort of metatext onto which oral tradition theory and theories of authorship can be placed. There is no beginning, no Ur-text or even Ur-tradition.

You [= Muses] are gods: you are there [when things happen] and you know everything;

But we [= singers] know nothing: we just hear the kleos.

—Iliad II 485–486

There have been concurrent strains of written and oral tradition in the development and transmission of the text. Language is constructed as agency to memory and to inhabit poetic and fixed forms, thereby becoming sacred and unchanging. The mnemonic becomes part of the writing and ceases to affect the performance of the word. The sound of the language both in the fixed and bound phrases (and idioms) and the flexible phraseology is removed for lack of evidence. Later, developing musical traditions revisited the text and, using the older forms of Masoretic interpretative preservation of tradition, affixed a sacred, though separate tradition of ambitus and relationship of underlying chordic and notational harmonics. The chant thus became codified.

Although there can be no definitive performance practice, the received musical traditions should not be dismissed as bumptious and/or non-authentic. Great care has been taken to try and link the music traditions to an inviolate and sacred whole. Until serious efforts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the musical traditions were oral as passed between generations; this does not diminish the power of expression or the need for a tradition at once removed from and linked with the written, dominant form of transmission.

The mystery of the original mode of transmission can be alluded to using this later musical theory and using the Masorah. An intertraditional approach, one between oral and written, is necessary to attempt

to recover the melody of the sacred text (in this case איכה. By using the Masoretic link, we uncover the patterns of human speech, reflected in the poetics of the text and coupled with the later practices of recitation, (the cantillation systems and other musical traditions in use today). On a broader level, such a synthesis helps guide us to contemplate the vast worlds relating music to word and ultimately a people to its Creator.

## NOTES

1. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, *Sefer yezirah*, commentary, p. 168. The entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies is seen as a symbol of mystical experience which has a connection with music. See further:

ימשוך רוח אלקים חיים בנגינות ידועים שהם ל"ב נגינות אשר התורה  
מתגלגלת בהם ואמרו כי אותם הנגינות הם טעמי התורה  
He should draw the spirit of the Living God by means of known  
melodies which are the thirty-two melodies according to which  
the Torah is transposed. They say that those melodies are the  
cantillation accents of the Torah (טעמי התורה)

2. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 120 ff. Referring to the sign (the word) as encompassing phonics and sound, de Saussure states,

[W]hen we consider the sign in its totality, we have something that is positive in its own class. A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas; but the pairing of a certain number of acoustical signs with as many cuts made from the mass of thought engenders a system of values; and this system serves as the effective link between the phonic and psychological elements within each sign. Although both the signified and the signifier are purely differential and negative when considered separately, their combination is a positive fact; it is even the sole type of facts that language has, for maintaining the parallelism between the two classes of differences is the distinctive function of the linguistic institution.



3. Contra Westermann who promotes איכה as a unified conception. It can be seen that even if the third chapter is a later import from a compiler/redactor, the Masorah places any stylistic difference into its conceived pattern of סתומות and פתוחות, which reinforces the break in the mode in chapter five as highly suggestive, either as a later addition or mechanisms of confluence within the text.

For a full discussion of the characteristics and forms of סתומות and פתוחות, see Christian D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (New York, NY: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1966), pp. 9-24. See Appendix A for the complete text of איכה, *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition*, ibid

4. The author differs from Ginsburg's presentation in naming these Masoretic methods of analysis. He includes a fourth criterion, the division into chapters, yet he recognizes that this practice is not of Jewish origin. For our purpose, the סדרים designation accomplish this division—especially if one views the Tiberian Masorah as definitive.
5. Cf. Luba Uveeler and Norman M. Bronznick, *Ha-Yesod: Fundamentals of Hebrew*, (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishing, 1980), introduction, especially vowel assignation. Also, personal correspondence, Dr. Edward Gershfield, reflecting variances in Ashkenaz pronunciation due to long and short vowels, 1996
6. Page H. Kelley, *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, p. 141, following the Masoretic note that occurs: וקר חת ב מילין וקר חדה.
7. One of eight instances written where that which is written as two word should be read as one. Cf. Masorah Magna (Mm) 214, which shows fifteen occurrences where precisely opposite is the case; namely, fifteen times when the סתם/קרי indicates where a word is written as one but should be read as two.
8. Received in private correspondence with Dr. Alan Cooper, 14 December 1997. Robert S. Sturges reviewing Jesse M. Gellrich, *Discourse and Dominion in the Fourteenth Century: Oral Contexts of Writing in Philosophy, Politics and Poetry*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
9. Sturges claims,

Rhetoric, to be sure, is associated with (oral) oratory; but its rules are preserved in a tradition of highly literate written texts, suggesting that Gellrich's embedded orality may itself conceal an even more deeply embedded literacy.

10. Kelley, p. 136. The *Magna Parva* (Mp) notes to these fifteen words have a different form in the Leningrad Codex; cf. Mm 944.
11. Ibid., p. 157 ff. מִדְּמָן: "mnemonic devices, excerpts, or signs used for referring to such things as the location of words, phrases, or verses; the order of familiar nouns commonly occurring in series; or the differences in two similar passages."
12. Ibid., p. 191

The emendation (or euphemisms) of the scribes, also called *Tiqqune Sopherim*. An ancient tradition lists eighteen passages which have been emended for theological tradition. Most were designed to remove irreverent statements or inferences about God. These emendations usually involved minor changes such as the omission of one or more consonants or words, or the transposition of consonants or words within a verse.

13. Kelley, p. 39. False emendations crept into these scribal lists. McCarthy claims that,

enthusiastic rabbis interpreted the text euphemistically, and a variant reading was established, although the received text had never been changed. Thus, these emendations are really no more than midrashic commentary on the received text and do not represent text history. Some of these false emendations probably occurred very early in the *Tiqqune Sopherim* tradition.

If the modern reader decides that a passage contains an authentic emendation, then the original reading will represent an earlier stage of the text history. If the emendation is false, readers must ask: a: did the text intend to express itself euphemistically in the first place (the text does not mean what it says) or b: is the text expressing itself directly?

For a fuller treatment of this circumstance, see McCarthy, *Tiqqune Sopherim*.

14. Mm 1024. A further examination of the other occurrence of this, Genesis 42:11, reveals that the word מִן with a qamets is in pausal form, following a regular pattern throughout Biblical literature, cf. Yeivin, p. 266-67, thus minimizing, at first glance, the import of the Masoretic note, above.
15. Ilan Eldar, "The Art of Correct Reading of the Bible," *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of IOMS*, ed. Aron Dotan (Scholars Press, SBL/IOMS, 1992). Pp. 33-42. This is a good application of Masoretic forms to research the reading of the Bible. See also, A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development*, (New York, NY: Dover 1992) and A. W. Binder, *Biblical Chant* (New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1959) for a discussion on the evolution and differing musical traditions of declaiming the sacred text. Cf. Kelley, p. 110 and Yeivin, p. 199. What the original significance of these comments is remains unclear and awaits further study and future scholarship. To uncover the remains of a preexisting oral tradition remains possible by researching the meaning and function of the tropal system and its intercultural relationship, specifically between Greek, Byzantine, and early Christian chant.
16. I am indebted to my teacher, Dr. David Marcus, for this and many other insights regarding Masoretic studies. The exposure to the Masorah and its application deserve a lengthy lifetime study to help make clear not only the text but its oral transmission and oral tradition.
17. Received in private correspondence with Dr. Alan Cooper, 14 December 1997. Barry B. Powell reviewing *Gregory Nagy, Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

All the music is lost when an oral song is taken down in writing; the written version is a skeleton, a snapshot of the language of the original song, for those clever enough to decipher it from a continuous stream of unaccented signs, with capitalization or word division.

Indeed, Powell comments that Nagy claims that the dimension

of text is a derivative of performance, where each successive period reflects a progressively narrower concept of textuality, from transcript, to script, to scripture, ergo the sacred, written tradition. This process is described as crystallization.

18. A similar rich heritage of interpretative folk tunes may be found throughout the Jewish liturgical year. Although substituting special tunes for specific occasion for liturgy, involving prayer practice is a somewhat different topic, a similar dynamic is occurring. The specific examples of *שבעות אקדמות* (פסח) *אדיר הוא* and *הושענות* immediately come to mind.

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# A Change of “Heart” — Altering a Word to Save a Work

*Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman*

Even a casual listener can hear that musical tastes have changed over time. The rules which bound musicians of the Renaissance were no longer binding upon Bach; Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Schoenberg and a host of other composers in between and since have rewritten the theory books time and again. While generally eschewing the rules and styles of yesteryear when writing or commissioning new music, we can, and often do choose to immerse ourselves in another era when we listen to or perform great works of the past.

But in the era of “political correctness” which has characterized the last decades of the 20th century, it is often difficult to revisit certain works without cringing at their anachronistic and often downright offensive texts. After witnessing the triumph of civil rights over the bigotry of segregation, for example, Stephen Foster’s once-charming songs of “gay darkies” have lost much of their appeal. In the aftermath

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The author is indebted to Ms. Joan D Levin, presently of Chicago, IL, for not only entrusting to her the telling of this story, but for providing

of the horrors to which anti-Semitism gave birth during World War II, the Anti-Defamation League has been called upon to come to the aid of audience members offended by Medieval ballads whose lyrics popularized the "blood libels" on whose accounts innumerable Jewish reputations and lives have been sacrificed.<sup>1</sup>

It may well be argued that it is unfair to impose twentieth-century styles and standards on works of another age. Without examining the merits of this position, it may certainly be suggested that contemporary lyricists and composers would do well to avoid such problems by giving careful consideration to the sensitivities of their audiences – and singers – when choosing or creating their texts. Unfortunately, as recently as 1963 this suggestion had not yet been registered when Benjamin Britten composed his *Cantata Misericordium*. What happened when just one singer found an "objectionable" passage in that work is a story which bears telling, both because it highlights the problem, and more importantly, because it provides an apparently unprecedented account of how an acceptable remedy was discovered and implemented.

In 1983, when singer Joan Levin had been a member of the Choral Arts Society of Washington, D.C. for four years, the group began its rehearsals for a scheduled Kennedy Center performance of Britten's *Cantata Misericordium*. Levin was, and still is, a self-described "choral junkie" who had already participated in major concert hall performances of such works as masses by Mozart, Beethoven and Berlioz, Mahler's *Symphony of One Thousand* and Rachmaninoff's *Vespers*. As one of only a few Jewish singers in the choir, Levin fully recognized that

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copies of all the relevant documentation, as well as her own detailed account of the chronology and players involved

1. A March, 1996 performance by Thomas Allen of Britten's "Little Sir William" occasioned much approbrium both at the concert in Washington, D.C.'s Lisner Auditorium, and in the "Letters to the Editor" of the *Washington Post*. Tim Page responded with a thoughtful essay (*Washington Post*, Friday, March 22, 1996) which dealt in great detail with this performance, and with the larger question of how "offensive lyrics" of the past are to be handled in the modern era. The issues arises regularly as performances of Bach's "Passions" and other works based upon Old Testament texts are mounted. See

those Christian liturgical works did not represent her own religious sensibilities. However, since they were works presented in concert settings, she was not offended by their textual content.

Britten's *Cantata Misericordium* was commissioned for the 100th anniversary of the founding of the International Red Cross. The work is based on the well-known New Testament Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke, Chapter 10) in which a lowly Samaritan saves the victim of a robbery and beating after a priest and a Levite have already ignored him and his injuries. The intended parallel to the good work of the International Red Cross is obvious. The biblical story, as related in the name of Jesus, is also brought to teach the superiority of human kindness over rigid obedience to religious law. It further represents the opinion that observant Judaism of the time was less merciful than Jesus' vision of what religion ought to be. While one might disagree with its conclusion, the cantata was intended as a concert work from which Levin expected no discomfort.

During a short break following work on a particularly difficult section, Levin glanced casually at the translation of the troublesome passage. She was surprised to read a text which she did not remember from the biblical account. In translation, it read:

Oh the hard hearts of men! This one too saw him lying there and passed by and hastened his pace. Is he afraid of being polluted by touching a corpse? Go on, sacrosanct Levite, observe the inhuman prescriptions of your law.

True, a Levite who touched a dead man entered into a state of ritual impurity which prevented him from carrying out his religious obligations. Jesus' contemporaries would also have known, though, that Jewish law required that same Levite to go to any lengths necessary to save a still-living person.

A check of the original text confirmed that the Levite's supposed fear of being polluted by a corpse was an extra-biblical gloss supplied

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also Michael Marissen, *Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism and Bach's "St. John Passion"* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

by the librettist, Cambridge classics scholar Patrick Wilkinson. The addition appeared to produce a slur subtly condemning all of Jewish law, rather than the one unkind Levite who ignored his own teachings. Levin consulted two rabbinical authorities for theological advice,<sup>2</sup> both of whom agreed with her that the passage represented a defamation of Jewish tradition.

With the scheduled concert only weeks away, Levin approached Choral Arts Society Director Norman Scribner, who was disturbed by the revelation she presented, but concerned with the logistics of altering plans for a major program. Levin suggested that a program note be inserted explaining that the sentiments expressed in the libretto did not reflect mainstream Jewish theology. Dr. Wayne Shirley, a fellow chorister and musicologist at the Library of Congress who was responsible for writing the program notes agreed to do just that. His text included the following:

Their grasp of Jewish law is fallable: there are no "inhuman laws" that would prevent the Levite from helping the Traveler. The Levite, like the priest, is just another person better at preaching than at practicing.

Notwithstanding the support she had received from Scribner and Shirley, Levin remained silent during the singing of the offensive passage. Moreover, she realized that future performances of the work by others would not necessarily receive such sensitive handling. She resolved to do what she could to change the text.

Before doing so, Levin sought and received the support of leading Christian clergy,<sup>3</sup> all of whom agreed that the offending passage should

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2. Rabbi Eugene Lipman (now deceased) of Temple Sinai in Washington, D.C., taught at Catholic University there; Rabbi Hayim Gooren Perelmuter of KAM-Isaiah Israel in Chicago taught at both Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA, and at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, specializing in the development of Judaism during the time of Jesus.

3. Reverend Canon Earl H. Brill, Director of Studies at the Washington Cathedral (Episcopal) College of Preachers; and Rev. Professor John T.



be changed.

Armed with unanimous ecumenical support, Levin wrote to the Copyright Department of Britten's London publisher, Boosey & Hawkes, in July 1983, painstakingly explaining both her high regard for the music, and her concern that its performance as originally texted would perpetuate all-too-common misperceptions and negative stereotypes of Jews and Jewish law. In concluding her letter, Levin wrote:

I appreciate that undertaking a change in a work of this magnitude is not an easy task. Even broaching the subject has been difficult, as Mr. Britten's work represents the very best of our culture's artistic achievement. Yet I believe that Mr. Britten would, upon reflection, understand the agony that such distortions have brought to so many for so long, and welcome the opportunity to correct his record for posterity.

In reply, Levin was informed that her letter had been forwarded to the Estate of Benjamin Britten, but no other communication was forthcoming. In a January, 1986 letter to the Britten Executors, Levin reiterated her case, and even offered a simple solution: a substitution of the word "cordis" (heart) for the original "legis" (law) would cause the text to read "the inhuman prescriptions of your heart," and without altering the rhythm of the music, place blame for the Levite's inaction on his shoulders alone.

In a letter dated February 28, 1986, the Trustees of the Britten Estate acknowledged Levin's correspondence, and observed that:

from their own close knowledge of and association with the composer there was no intention on his part that the text of this work should cause offense. Moreover, he would have wished for any

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Palikowski, a member of the American Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Catholic Jewish Relations. Later, The Very Reverend Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and Director of the Episcopal Committee on Episcopal-Jewish Affairs was also consulted, and lent his support as well.

ambiguity such as this to be clarified.

The letter went on to say that the trustees had accepted Levin's suggested amendment to the text, and would instruct Boosey & Hawkes to make the necessary alteration, and to confirm that change to Ms. Levin. That letter was received on March 18, 1986,<sup>4</sup> and in fact, all subsequent editions of *Cantata Misericordium* have borne the following note on the title page:

*Note by the Publishers* The Benjamin Britten Trust recommends that the words "cordis tui" (of your heart) should be substituted for the words "legis tui" (of your law) 13 bars after rehearsal number 19, and that all future performances should use the revised wording. August 1986.

#### AFTERWORD

As satisfactorily as this story may appear to have concluded, one must remember that the publisher's note appears only on the title page of the work; the score, 13 bars after rehearsal number 19, continues to bear the original text, "legis tui" (your laws). The recommended alteration could easily be missed (how many people study the title page of a musical work...?), or for that matter, rejected by conductors and singers who are not sensitive to the subtle distinctions in the two texts, and who do not know the background. It is with the hope that the latter "excuse"

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4. In acknowledging the Trustees instructions, one A. P. Pool of Boosey & Hawkes expressed reservations about the change. He stated that the work had been performed "in several countries of the world, including, in our view, significantly, Israel, with an Israeli orchestra" without any prior complaint. Pool further enclosed an October, 1983 letter from librettist Patrick Wilkinson, defending his interpretation of the New Testament parable. (Wilkinson was by then deceased) This was the first Levin knew of his involvement in the matter so early on.

Pool's and Wilkinson's statements seemed to explain why the publisher had taken no action in the two-and-a-half years between Levin's original letter

could be neutralized that Ms. Levin sought to tell her story, and that this writer agreed to play the narrator. A dozen years after reaching an unprecedented resolution in this instance, the issue of offensive texts continues to be problematic in all manner of vocal works. In an ideal future, the kind of after-the-fact emendations effected in the Britten cantata will become unnecessary, and the music—and texts—will only be filled with harmony.

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to the publisher, and her subsequent approach directly to the trustees. At this point Levin feared that the Trustees instructions might yet be reversed, and she called upon her friends in the clergy to write to the publisher in support of the change. Most did so. Whether or not those letters had any effect on the final decision is unclear, but it testifies to the writers' continuing interest in the matter.

# In Every Generation They Threaten to Destroy Us: Reflections on the Loss of Memory

*Hazzan Dr. Scott M. Sokol*

My grandmother was stricken with Alzheimer's Disease about seven or eight years ago. This disease first robbed her of her confidence, then her intellect and eventually her life. Alzheimer's is a devastating disease, and in my other profession as a neuropsychologist, I've seen scores of individuals who suffer from it. In each case it is an extremely difficult diagnosis to have to share with a family; in the case of my own grandmother (and other than herself, I was probably the first to notice its telltale signs), it was of course even more so. My grandmother had an extraordinary mind and a nearly eidetic memory, and therefore I could claim that in her case this disease was particularly horrific, but the truth is that it is horrific for everyone—I just saw and felt her deterioration more acutely.

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But, I'd rather not talk about my grandmother's dying or her death; rather, let me tell you just a bit about her life. Helen Kay ז"ל was an incredibly strong woman, the oldest sister and in many ways the matriarch of a family of nine children, several of whom she brought over from Poland and raised while her own parents were separated by the Atlantic Ocean. My grandmother was therefore a mother to many relatives aside from her own three children. Countless brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and of course her eight grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren, all considered her something of a second mother. Indeed, starting with my oldest cousin and on, all her grandchildren and great-grandchildren called her not Grandma, not Bubbe, but just "Ma" because that was in essence what she was to us.

In one of the three *hespedim* made at her funeral, one Rabbi remarked about this fact and likened my grandmother to the prophetess Devorah, whose story we of course just read in today's *haftarah*. Devorah too was an extraordinary woman who wore many hats: Judge, prophet, warrior and leader of the people. But how does Devorah refer to herself? What is the most important aspect to her life as far as she is concerned? It is as a mother. In the *Shirat Devorah*, the Song of Devorah (for which in fact this sabbath is in part named), she states:

חָדְלוּ פְּרוֹן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל חָדְלוּ עַד שִׁקְמָתִי דְּבוֹרָה שִׁקְמָתִי אִם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:  
*The rulers in Israel ceased, they ceased, until I Devorah rose, a MOTHER  
 in Israel*

Like Devorah, I think my grandmother would have wanted to be thought of first and foremost as a "mother in Israel." I think there are several other aspects to my grandmother that are reminiscent of

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Author's Note: This article was originally presented as my yearly Shabbat Shirah sermon. Although it is often difficult to convey a spoken presentation in written format, I have done so to the best of my ability, changing as little as possible of the original text. I thank Rabbi William Hamilton for his encouragement.

Devorah. Like Devorah, she was a native-born leader, one to whom others looked for acceptance and favor. She too took it upon herself to be a judge, and although strong-willed and occasionally even a bit harsh in her judgments, she simply “called ’em like she saw them” or as she might put it, “I only speak the truth.”

These aspects of my grandmother remind me not only of today’s haftarah, but also of the Torah portion. Recently, I was asked to teach at the Jewish Educators Assembly conference which met here at KI a couple of weeks ago. The topic of the conference was *Ayzehugibor?* Who is a *gibor*, a hero?, with the goal of seeing ourselves as heroes to the Jewish people. What I attempted to tackle in my specific text study was God as a *gibor*, and looked to the *shirat bayam*—today’s torah portion—for clues about God’s *gvurah*. I have of course studied the *shira* text many times, if for no other reason so that I can have something to say at this yearly sermon. As always when I looked back at this *shirah*—this time with the thought in mind of God as *gibor*—I found several new aspects to the text, inspired by Rashi. Unfortunately, given time constraints, I will only be able to mention one today.

In the second line of the *shirah*, *Moshe rabenu* says the following:

עַי וְחִמְתָּ יְיָ וְיִדְרִלִּי לִישׁוּעָה

Literally, this phrase appears to best be translated as “My strength and the song of God were to me a salvation.” Although many interesting interpretations could be offered for this literal translation, one thing that has always struck me as odd is why it would be *My strength* and *God’s song* that have been a salvation. To my mind at least, the opposite would seem to better reflect what just went on with Moses and *b’nei yisrael*. That is, it was *God’s strength* and then *Moses and Miriam’s song* which heralded salvation.

The well-known translation of Onkelos is a bit different than the literal one; he translates the phrase עַי וְחִמְתָּ יְיָ into Aramaic as תְּקַפִּי וְתִשְׁבַּחַתִּי דְּחִילָא ... implying that both nouns refer to the singer (i.e., “The Eternal is my might and my hymn,” as translated in the Silbermann edition of Chumash with Rashi). Rashi himself has trouble with the



translation of this text, both the apparent literal translation as well as Onkelos'. He begins a long discussion of this point by saying:

אֲנִי קְלוֹם תִּרְגָּם תִּקְפִּי וְתִשְׁבַּחְתִּי, עֲזִי כְמוֹ עֲזִי, וְזִמְרָת כְּמוֹ וְזִמְרָתִי, וְאֲנִי תִמְנָה  
עַל לִשׁוֹן הַמִּקְרָא....

*Onkelos translates "my strength and my hymn," Ozi—my strength (with kamarz) as Uzi—my strength (with kiburz), and "and the song of" as "and my song," but I wonder about this translation ..*

Basically, this is Rashi's polite way of saying Onkelos got it wrong. Rashi takes us on a rather long-winded grammatical excursion (which time doesn't allow me to describe, but which you can read on your own) in which he concludes that עֲזִי is not *my* anything, but a noun without a suffix (and gives other examples of this in the *tanach*). In other words, it is God's strength together with God's *zimrab* which were *b'nei yisrael's* salvation. And furthermore that these two aspects of God go hand in hand as a sort of dialectic epithet. As for the word *zimrab*, Rashi gives a couple of creative possibilities as to its meaning (i.e., other than song or hymn).

Personally, I think it's straightforward enough. If God can have strength in a way that we can understand, then He certainly can have song.\*

Understood in this way, God's *gvurab*, his mighty acts of war, are tempered by beauty and song. And these taken together—might and song—are our perpetual salvation.

As a *bazzan*, this particular dialectic seems a critical one, and once again brings me back to my grandmother, a woman of enormous strength, but also a woman of beauty and of song. I am told that my grandmother had a beautiful voice, though it is a mystery to me why she never sang in my lifetime or even during that of my mother. When asked, she would say that she once had a beautiful voice, but that she lost it through asthma. Whether this is the whole story I rather doubt

\* There is some support from related language etymologies (e.g., Ugaritic) for translating the root זמר as a near synonym of "strength." Nonetheless, "song" is also an ancient translation of the root.

knowing my grandmother, but be that as it may her decision not to sing had no bearing on her continued appreciation for music. Her grandfather was a *bazzan*, as are two of her brothers, and music and *bazzanus* were always a part of her life. Whenever I saw her as a child, she would ask me to sing, and she passed along her love of music and singing to her children and grandchildren. For her, music and melody were always the most direct conduits to memory and emotion.

One of the melodies I associate most closely with my grandmother is one apparently sung by her father (for whom I am actually named). The melody, as we will see, is a traditional one with some unique variation. I'll share the melody with you later on, but I'd like to first talk a bit about the text that the melody sets as it is directly relevant to today's parsha. It is the *V'bi She'amdab* prayer that we sing at the Passover *seider*. The text of the prayer appears below, along with the linear translation of the Metsudah *Haggadah*, with the words that the Metsudah thinks are unstated but understood, in brackets:

וְהָיָא שְׁעִמְדָּה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׂלֵא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד, עֲמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֱלֹהִי  
שְׁבָכָל-דּוֹר דּוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.  
*It is that [pledge to Abraham our Father] that has sustained our forefathers  
and us, for it has not been merely one [ruler or nation] who has arisen,  
determined to destroy us. Rather, in every generation there arise those who  
would destroy us. But the Holy One, blessed is He, has always rescued us  
from their hands.*

The prayer is certainly directly relevant to today's *parsha*. Indeed, one could argue that its Toraitic source *is* today's parsha. In the *maftir aliyah* of *Parshat B'shalach*, we read the following words spoken by God to Moses:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה כָּתֹב זֶאת וְקֵרֹן בַּסֶּפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי-רָמַחָה  
אֶמְחָה אֶת-זִכְרֹךְ עַמְּלֶךְ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיְבֵן מֹשֶׁה מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יְהוָה |  
נִסִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יֵה מְלַחְמָה לַיהוָה בַּעֲמֶלְךָ מִדּוֹר דּוֹר:  
*And the Lord said unto Moses: Write this for a memorial in the book and  
rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly blot out the remembrance  
of Amalek from under the heavens. And Moses built an altar, and called it*

*"The Lord is my Banner." And he said: Because the Lord hath sworn by His throne, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation*

Much could be said about these *p'sukim*, the first in particular, but it is the last sentence that seems to hearken most closely to the *V'bi She'amdab*, i.e., that there will be an "Amalek" whom God will fight in every generation. The *V'bi She'amdab* affirms God's pledge to our ancestors that he would save them from out of the hands of the Egyptians, the fulfilment of which the *shirah* we read today describes. But the *V'bi She'amdab* also reminds us that it is not only one nation, namely Egypt, that has arisen to destroy us, but that in every generation there are those who would destroy us.

The truth of the *V'bi She'amdab* cannot be denied. Our history as a people is replete with attempted genocide. The original oppression by Pharaoh, our enslavement and suffering, were but a prototype: In every generation someone has stood against us to try to destroy us, whether Amalek, Haman, the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition or the Nazis. But the *V'bi She'amdab* not only reminds us that our enemies are many; more importantly it states succinctly and unequivocally: **וְהָקְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם**, *בְּרַךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם*, whoever the enemy, God will save us from their hands

I would like to suggest an extension on this thought. The translation of the *V'bi She'amdab* that I supplied from the *Metsudah Haggadah* implies that our threat is always in the form of a person or a people. We assume that this is what is meant by **בְּכָל-דּוֹר וָדּוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ**—in every generation they stand to destroy us. I believe, however, that the threat described in the *V'bi She'amdab* is not limited to conquering peoples, but to non-human events as well. In support of this notion, it is interesting that the Hebrew of the prayer never mentions the word nation or people in describing the perpetual threat to our survival (that is, it doesn't say **בְּכָל-דּוֹר וָדּוֹר עוֹמְדִים גּוֹיִם עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ**). Rather, it takes advantage of Hebrew's ability to use indefinite nominative forms to imply a person. Therefore, we could just as easily translate the phrase **אֶחָד בְּלִבְדּוֹ, עֹמֵד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ** as meaning, "not just one thing has

stood to destroy us," אֵלֶּה שְׂבָכַל-דּוֹר וְדּוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְבִלּוֹתֵנוּ "rather in every generation there are forces which threaten to destroy us."

This, I think, is the more apt translation. Indeed, in this age and in this country at least, anti-semitism and its associated persecution, though still present, are arguably not the most dangerous threats to our survival as a people. One might in fact argue that the *lack* of anti-semitism is an indirect problem in that Jews are more accepted by society and assimilation is therefore that much easier. Although I do not espouse this view, at least not entirely—since I think that anti-semitism is still a serious problem in certain arenas and more importantly that religious freedom is a critical societal goal—I believe one of the more proximal threats to our survival is loss of memory. What I mean is that we have forgotten as a people so much of what have been our tools for survival over the millenia—at least the non-Divine tools.

The loss of memory, the loss of shared traditions, is to my mind one of the primary reasons why so many of the past and the present generation of Jews left the fold and/or contented themselves to be unaffiliated and uninvolved. It is also the reason why so many Jews looking for "spirituality," the catch-word of the last few decades, went elsewhere such as to Eastern religions. They knew of no choice within their own religion, because the memory of those aspects of Judaism had been lost by their own parents, or simply were not transmitted, which in essence amounts to the same loss.

This is true of many aspects of Jewish life, and Jewish music is unfortunately no exception. So much of the richness of our melodies has been lost or superceded by the secular or pop melodies which surround us even in the synagogue. And I don't think this fact is insignificant; as I have argued often before, music is one of the most basic carriers of our faith and our spirituality. It cuts to the heart of emotional experience and as well carries a wealth of rich associations. In the modes and motives of ethnic music, so much of a people can be conveyed.

But despite its immediate effect on the listener, a true appreciation of a specific type of music needs to be learned and cultivated. Just as with a foreign language, it is not possible to fully understand the inner

meaning of music without adequate early and continued exposure to it.

Cognitive psychologists have studied this issue at some length. For example, a series of experiments were carried out to determine how distinct ethnic music is perceived by those of other ethnicities who have never heard it before. They looked at the Indian Raga, a prototypical type of music in the Hindu culture, and played it for subjects who grew up with that type of music versus those who did not. They discovered that the native listeners perceived, structured and recalled the music in wholly different ways than the novice listeners. You or I can't hope to understand the structure or significance of the modes and motifs of Indian music, but to the native listener it carries complexity and specific meaning. You need only think about a melody such as the *Kol Nidrei*, or the *Shirat Hayam* for that matter, to imagine what I am talking about.

The loss of memory of course is relevant to my remarks today not just for our losses as a people, but also for our losses individually. The reason I predicated this discussion on the *V'bi She'amdab*, as I mentioned, is that to my mind and in my own memory it is the melody which I will always most closely associate with my grandmother, and it seemed to be the one she most closely associated with her own father. Every year at *seders* with my grandparents, when we'd get to the *V'bi She'amdab* and start singing it, my grandmother would suddenly be drawn into another world, the world of her father. And the bittersweet memory of him never failed to bring her to tears. As a child, I thought of this almost like a game. We'd start singing *V'bi She'amdab* and she'd start crying as if on cue. Of course, I didn't think of it as funny; I knew she was sad and that always made me a little sad too, but I didn't really understand it. Not until many years later, frankly. And that was when Alzheimer's finally took hold of her to the point that her own associations of this melody were gone. The first time that we sang *V'bi She'amdab* and my grandmother didn't cry was the first time that I did. I knew then what was meant by *בְּכָל-דּוֹר וְדּוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתָנוּ* —in every generation there are those things which threaten to destroy us, whether the loss of memory or the fact of memory.

Now, though, what I also realize is that regardless of the pain

### *In Every Generation*

associated with loss, our memories of a person or of a people must be preserved and passed along. In those memories, and in the comfort of the Almighty, is our ultimate salvation. And so with that thought in mind I would like to close by singing for you my grandmother's and my great-grandfather's *V'bi She'amdab*, to remember, to grieve and to be saved from that grief.



## וְהָיָא שְׁעֵמֶדָה

Ehrlich family tradition

transcribed by Scott Sokol

1  
Ve - hi she-awm-daw ve - hi she-awm-daw la - vo-sey-nu ve -

5  
law - nu Ve - hi she-awm-daw ve - hi she-awm-daw la - vo-sey-nu ve - law - nu

10  
She - lo e - chawd bil - vawd aw - mad aw-ley - nu le - cha - lo - sey - nu

14  
She - lo e - chawd bil - vawd aw - mad aw-ley - nu le - cha - lo - sey - nu

18  
E - law, e-law she-be - chawd dor vaw - dor, oym-dim aw-ley-nu le - cha-lo-say-nu

24  
dai dai dai dai dai dai dai dai dai *fine*

28  
dai dai dai dai dai dai dai dai

32  
Ve - ha - kaw-dosh baw-ruch hu ma - tsi - ley - nu mi - yaw-dawm

36  
Ve - ha - kaw-dosh baw-ruch hu ma - tsi - ley - nu mi - yaw-dawm *del segno al fine*

# Mystics, Mantras, and Minyans: The Hazzan Goes to Harvard

*Hazzan Robert Scherr*

As prologue, I should set the question: given the opportunity for a year of study, an eight-month sabbatical from my congregational duties as a hazzan, why did I choose Harvard Divinity School? Wouldn't a hazzan—and his community—be well-served by a year of studying music, particularly Jewish music? Or couldn't one spend productive time with the resources of our very own [Boston] Hebrew College? My original thought for the year's project had been the speculation that as Jews, we are so influenced by the ethos of "religious behavior" from the non-Jewish world around us, a leader in the community should know something about Christianity and other world religions. Perhaps by studying others, I would have a basis to know more about ourselves. Therefore, Harvard Divinity School seemed like a wonderful resource.

Here's a tip: If you wish to learn about a school, I suggest that you search three places: the bookstore, the cafeteria, and the bathroom. At the Harvard Divinity School, the bookstore purveys quite a wide

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array of books on theology, original liturgy, dictionaries for languages which are studied by HDS students, ranging from Hebrew to German to Sanskrit and Hindi; pastoral care, Biblical studies, and world religions. And for a returning student who last bought so many books at once nearly thirty years ago, the prices of books these days was quite staggering; but this is not news for any of you who have paid college expenses for your children in recent years.

The significance of the cafeteria is not for culinary quality, but rather because it is the natural social center. It's important in the formation of friendships, where students from all over the world can break bread together, and have the kinds of meaningful discussions which constitute the real *education* which goes with school. It's as satisfying at age 50 as it was at 20 to engage a bright colleague in a discussion which feels so meaningful that you are delighted to forego the lecture in the next class because of the discussion of the last one. The Refectory turns into a pub on Friday nights, and while I never was able to participate in that aspect of student life, I am told that the Pub nights for Divinity Students are just about as exciting as you might have thought. You see, when Div students get wild and out of control, it's more likely to be at the Reserve Reading desk in the library than in the pub!

As for the bathrooms downstairs, these are new and styled to be individual, thus open to use by either sex without particular designation. Gender neutrality is an important part of student life at Harvard Divinity School.

Harvard Divinity School is a place where folks come to study about religion, and even study about the meaning of their personal faiths, but not necessarily to find co-religionists for common practice. I have noticed in the cafeteria that it's hard to find anyone sitting down to eat who seems to pause to recite a blessing of some kind. There is a chapel at the Div School, but it is significant as much for who is not there as who is, and how it is used.

Although occasional Friday nights feature dances held at the Refectory Pub, the most important dance done at the School is what Professor Jon Levenson calls the Liberal Protestant Two-Step, A Song and Dance, performed thus: The Liberal Protestant wants to start a

discussion about religion with someone from another tradition because the LP highly values pluralism. The dance begins with several dainty steps forward toward a dialogue partner, while reciting, "This is what I believe." The forward steps cease, as the LP says, "Oh dear, I can see by your reaction that I have offended you or that you disagree." The LP now steps daintily backward to the original position. "I'm so sorry, let me try again." The next forward steps are taken slightly obliquely to the original direction, while reciting, "Maybe I meant to say it this way. . .; you feel OK about that?" By the end of the dance, the LP usually finds that while the goal might have been to return to an orientation from the starting point, because one's own position is still evolving, the starting point has been completely lost.

*Pluralism* is a popular word at the Div School, coined to express the idea that more than just *diversity*, pluralism is the engagement, the trusted relationship between faiths which, we hope, will become a public virtue. That is, our distinctive traditions do not wall us off from one another, but rather are *enabling* in dialogical encounters and continuing relationships – that is, not mere *tolerance* but *trust*.

My classmates were quite an extraordinary lot. I found more Jewish students than I'd expected, perhaps ten percent of my class. Although folks certainly are not at the Divinity School to study Judaism, they bring their varying backgrounds and make a clear Jewish presence among the many religions represented. Some people go to HDS for degrees in the Divinity program as preparation for ordination in various Protestant traditions. There are a few clergy on sabbatical leave, like myself, who found the stimulating atmosphere of the Ivory Tower a refreshing alternative to our daily lives in the "trenches." My MTS, Masters of Theological Studies program, had a remarkable variety of characters who have given me a whole new respect for the origins of intellectual inquiry. Nathan, a fundamentalist Christian, is a recent college grad who is at HDS between undergrad and law school, because this will be an important part of his training for a future political career when he returns to North Carolina. Sue is a lesbian who feels that only in the environment of a place like HDS can she explore the meaning of her beliefs about herself, her faith, and her sexual identity. Lois is a

lifelong community activist who came to HDS in mid-life to study ethics and public policy. Susan, a native of Calcutta, is writing about the post-colonial experience as reflected in traditional religion in India. Scott is a gay divinity student who taught me about the meaning of the voices of faith which are not heard by all of society. Some see this as part of a career change. Some have left successful careers in business or academia to search for further meanings, which will be based upon personal growth and reflection of both an intellectual and spiritual nature.

My own studies were primarily in the area of World Religions. Although I did not have it as my goal, it turned out that most of my learning had led me to explore two themes: the meaning of healing and wholeness, and the impact of *relationship* and *passion* in the search for God.

How may *religion* heal? The nexus of religion and the art of healing—within and without medical practice—is itself a field of study. Not too long ago you and I might have felt that when we took out our health plan card, we needed to close our *siddur*. Not too long ago, I would have looked askance at someone who claimed to be a *healer*, preferring the medical intervention of a pill and hypodermic every time. But that was before I had the opportunity to see a healer bring his powers into people's bodies and effect change. Once upon a time, we used the term *psychosomatic*—the influence of the brain on the body—as a pejorative. We dismissed those whose bodies were affected by their minds or spirits, as being out of control. Today, we take seriously the mind/body connection and teach this in every medical school.

Perhaps we confuse good health or physical strength with *wellness*. Some of us watch our hair become thinner or our waistlines become thicker and we say we are not as we used to be. But we are still well and still whole. We all know people with chronic diseases, some even life-threatening, who live each day with joy and fulfillment. We know that such people are well and whole, even though their bodies are affected with some kind of illness. I understand that when I pray the *Mi Sheberach* for health, I pray for *r'fuab sb'lemab*—I am praying for healing, *r'fuab*, and I am praying for *sb'lemut*—wholeness. We can ask,

but if our cancer does not suddenly disappear, perhaps we can feel God's presence in our lives to live well and fully even with the disease inside our bodies. And we can learn to feel God's presence in the courage to love each remaining moment of life. Once upon a time, there was an intimate relationship between the healers and the religious leadership. In ancient Greece, people who were afflicted came to sleep in the temple of Asclepius to have dreams which would cure their ailments. In 19th century America, drugs were dispensed by ministers whose practice of religious and medical arts was naturally linked.

I think my studies have changed my personal perspective on what to expect from my body and from the bodies of others. When I see someone in the hospital, I am more inclined to pray with them, and to reassure them that the illness which has debilitated them does not indicate God's absence, but rather it is an opportunity to feel closer to the healing power of God.

It has been interesting to learn how other cultures approach healing, and reflect this understanding against our own culture. Remember that *psychosomatic* is not a pejorative—we know many ways in which the body can be affected by the mind. Follow two approaches to this case:

Bernie was having trouble with his shoulder for almost a year. It bothered him when we played tennis, and finally he had to stop playing. His physician was able to bring only a little relief and Bernie finally started seeing a chiropractor. Those treatments were so effective that we were able to play tennis again. But every few weeks, the pain seemed to return and another course of treatment was necessary. During this time, after the *yahrtzeit* of his mother, Bernie decided to seek psychiatric help with his grieving. After some months of psychotherapy, Bernie discovered that his sadness translated into tension, which was located in his shoulder. As he came to grips with some of the issues between himself and his mother, *unfinished business* from before the time she died, he found that his bad shoulder no longer plagued him. Today he is back to beating me on the tennis court.

Now perhaps if Bernie had been part of the Nuer tribe in central Africa, his therapy may have gone like this. Going to the Shaman/healer when his shoulder was painful, the healer may have been able to learn



through various means that Bernie needed to settle unfinished business with his grandmother and his mother. The Shaman would prescribe a series of rituals—with some herbs, some smoke, some blood from a chicken and some mud from the river bank. Through the ritual, Bernie's shoulder would be cured.

In our culture, we have become attached to purely medical solutions. Although I mean no disrespect to the medical profession, I have learned to use a different perspective in considering other possibilities for healing: in short, our attitudes as human beings, created in God's image, need to support the wholeness and wellness of our bodies.

Another kind of healing and wholeness has to do with atonement and forgiveness. Every year we sit together in shul and recite long lists of confessions for sins—which we did or did not commit, each of us individually. We feel a responsibility to one another, and so we say, out loud, "we have lied, cheated, been unfaithful to those we love..." in order to bring those acts and tendencies out into the open. This is quite the contrast to the way our Catholic friends may confess in individual confession, privately confessing and receiving a priest's forgiveness. We rely on God to forgive our sins against God, but we rely on one another to forgive our misdeeds, and rely on ourselves to bring *t'sbuva*—a change in behavior.

But listen to how this works among the Yoruba people: the Yoruba have a public ritual of song and dance called the Gelede. The leader of this is the *Oro Efe*, sort of the hazzan of the village. When he begins his prayer, representing the very fulcrum of life and death, he prays for the protection of Orgun and Esu—the Gods—and the mothers. He appeals to their egos to make his prayer powerful and successful. It's not altogether different from my recitation of Hineni before Musaf on Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur. His prayer celebrates the power of God expressed in sexual and earthy ways, and the power of God which found its way to his mother and made him powerful through their union. The Gelede dance may also indict politicians or address misconduct by spouses. Imagine members of the village gathered in a circle. Several drummers are beating a polyrhythm, there is a chorus of singers, and then the Oro Efe, dressed in an elaborate costume, proclaims:



This world is harsh for you politicians.... Watch what you say.... Those who were doing it whom we told were not doing it properly...the World blew them away like shafts from wheat. You there, the girl you slept with last night was not your wife. And you, there, must return the necklace you took from your neighbor.

Human behavior is valued for how it affects others in the community. Like us, their "sins" are a public subject to be settled within the community. Like us, when the ritual of atonement is completed, it is in the presence of the community that forgiveness is achieved and confirmed.

The four most powerful, most healing words in any language are: *Your Sins Are Forgiven*. In all of these rituals, wholeness is achieved through ritual acts which bring closure and reassurance that we will go forward with hope and wholeness renewed.

One more word from Africa. Among the Akan, at the time of death, the mourner opens one's home to the community and provides lavish food and drink as hospitality to encourage visitation. It sounds like our *shiva*. But among the Akan, there is a basket placed prominently in the house for the guests to leave gifts or money, in proportional repayment to the lavishness of the food provided.

I want to say a word about God. I was truly blessed to be able to study theology with Sarah Coakley. Sarah was my teacher for an Introduction to Christian Theology. I used to think that systematic theology was really not very important. In Judaism, after all, as systematics, we stress communal practice—*halacha*, and mostly leave the exploration of belief to individuals. In Christianity, theology *is* halacha—evolved belief which unites the community. So I read Aquinas, Schleiermacher, Gordon Kaufman, and Sally McFague. I came to realize that not only were serious thinkers spending hundreds of pages describing God, but the very care and clarity with which their systems were constructed, and with which they deconstructed the thought of others, left me with an interest and tools with which to clarify my own understanding of the meaning of God in my life; in our lives. For Sarah Coakley, whose lectures are so carefully crafted that there are dozens of tape recorders

surrounding her podium, lest we lose even one precious word, theology is not abstract philosophy. She believes it is not enough to merely *describe* God. Our relationship with God demands practice; we must express our relationship with God through the reality of religious and moral behavior. It was her Episcopal way of saying that theology leads to a life of *mitzvot*.

In another class with Sarah, *Mystical Experience and the Feminist Critique*, I learned to consider the *meaning* of how some people experience God. Intimate and intense experiences from the Middle Ages became a model for the depth of mystical experience. At the same time, I became acquainted with the pain and suffering resulting when some people's voices, beliefs or passions are not heard, or taken seriously.

Teresa of Avila, a descendent of a Jewish family, was a nun in a convent in Spain at the time of the Inquisition. When she had to write her confession, to prove her Christian faith, she wrote of how God pierced her very body, "like a flaming arrow." Have *you* ever had such a remarkably full experience of God in your life? And if your friend, or wife, or daughter spoke like that, would you dismiss it as "hysteria?" (*Hysteria* of course is that word with which women's testimony always has been dismissed.) Can you feel God so powerfully that you feel it in your very body? John of the Cross was her contemporary, also filled with the presence of God. And when in the course of his meditations, he experienced an erection, he understood this as the presence of God in his body. How do we hear these voices in one another?

Hadewijch of Antwerp, the thirteenth century Flemish poet, was part of a religious women's movement whose members were known as *beguines*. Hadewijch, and other religious women of her time, saw in their female bodies a symbol of—and a means to approach—the humanity of God. Remember, Christianity understands God as Jesus Christ, a Divine Human form, so physicality has meaning as perspective on knowledge. In the ceremony of the Eucharist there is a physical contact with God's body and blood. So Hadewijch employs images of body and senses to express her union with God: After receiving the Eucharist, on one occasion, she writes,

He came in the form and clothing of a Man...looking like a human being...wonderful and beautiful. He came himself to me, took me entirely in his arms, and pressed me to him; and all my members felt his in full felicity, in accordance with the desire of my heart and my humanity. So I was outwardly satisfied and fully transported.

It is in the very important accessibility to God that great theologians engage many senses. The Shakers in the nineteenth century used the gifts of visual images to express God's perfection. Gordon Kaufman, HDS's leading theologian, says that God is indescribable, but we must engage ourselves in every kind of descriptive search for God, for that is what makes us most fully God's creatures on God's earth. Like Moses who cannot demand to see God face to face, but ultimately knows God intimately before he dies, I think we have to use all our skills as human beings—prayer, study, song, silence, the tenderness of kindness and the power of justice to fully experience God. We can open our bodies and our minds to this encounter, to fully engage with God, and remember that this is what it means to love another: to most fully open and engage ourselves.

Studying theology, I have learned, is not trying to assemble some ideas, like theorems in geometry, which wrap themselves neatly into a conclusion which can be tested and used as a formula for figuring things out. Rather I think that our search for God is a courageous act of living with dissonance. We should welcome the strange sounds which may assault our ears and souls, and wrestle, like Jacob, with ideas that challenge our minds and hearts because the world is not a simple place. We do *not* live in the Garden of Eden. We are human beings who must use our capacity for passion. The same people who can cheer loudly at a football game, or run hard on a tennis court, or revel in a pop concert's loudest song, must learn to exert their souls and hearts in religious engagement.

## THE EPILOGUE

Ari Goldman, the former New York Times reporter, now a professor

of Journalism at Columbia and a one-time neighbor of mine at Camp Yavneh, wrote the definitive book, *The Search for God at Harvard*. He was on sabbatical from the New York Times and spent a year something like mine. He was frustrated that he didn't find people actively engaged in religion at HDS, only studying about it.

I think I found something different. I found students who were frustrated themselves when homework kept them at a distance from the *ta'am*—the taste—of religious belief and practice. In the lunch room, although I didn't hear a word of grace or *motsi*, I heard conversations filled with sensitivity, passion, and commitment to grow in one's own faith through the faith of others. I learned that it is not necessary to dance the LP Two Step. One can dance one's own hora—freely and expressively. I came away from my year of study more intimate with God, with the meaning of faith, with a commitment to teach faith and text as a path to faith. I think I have come away knowing that the role of the hazzan is as an instrument of our tradition's song—a song which always must come from the depth of our souls and say something important that is not easy to reach.

I found that school was very hard work. I didn't have nearly the leisure experience of a sabbatical year that I'd hoped to enjoy. Religious practice is like that: we have a long list of mitzvot laid out before us—*shver tsu zein a yid*—we have hard work to do as Jews. But isn't it from the hardest work that one gets the greatest satisfaction? Prayer is not easy; God is not always at our beck and call. I have also come to realize that God is always with us as we search for God. It is the greatest Divine gift to humankind, whether at Harvard Divinity School, or Temple Israel of Natick, that a community which strives with passion and sincerity discovers that the words of the Psalmist are true—*Karov Adonai l'chol kor'av, l'chol asher yikrau-bu be-emet*: God is near to all who call upon God, to all who call upon God in Truth. Why *truth*? I think because *truth* is whole, passionate. When you look for God, be whole-hearted, as one telling the truth. Be as whole-hearted as your aerobic work-out. Be as whole-hearted as making love. Then you will experience the wholeness and nearness of God in truth and in love.

# Review of Recent Works

*Ki Keshimcha* by Abraham Levitt. Published by Musica Hebraica (38 Colony Drive East, West Orange NJ 07052. (973)-731-9411)

In these times when many publishers of Jewish music look mainly at the bottom line; in these days when much of what we hear in our synagogues and temples are pseudo-Hassidic and “virtual” nusach ditties—simply to satisfy the untutored taste of the *Olam Golem*, it is a delight to review the honest authentic work of a talented Hazzan/composer. Abe Levitt dedicated this piece to the memory of Moshe Ganchoff. It certainly shows the composer’s mentor’s influence, which is all to the good.

Holding up this composition to what I consider the prototype of *Ki Keshimchas* by Lichtenstein, found in Lewandowsky, I discover a most favorable comparison. Cantor Levitt’s music, although considerably more florid, shows complete sincerity both from an interpretive and melodic standpoint.

In its form, the *Ki Keshimcha* is very traditional. The key changes—(1) F Ahava Raba, (2) B $\flat$  minor, and (3) B $\flat$  Ahava Raba—are more or less standard. Ah! But what he does in interpreting the text within this simple musical framework!

He begins quietly, somewhat somberly. At *Ki im b’shuvo* he uses a sequential repetition of the words. In the next phrase, we find a brilliant melismatic passage on *veata yodea*, becoming quietly reserved at *basar vadam*. Now comes *Adam yesodo me’afar*, first darkly in acceptance of the decree, then passionately, almost in rebellion (“why, when we are capable of so much, are we but dust?”). In the Lichtenstein-Lewandowsky version of the text, a major seventh on both *me’afar* and *le’afar* is most

effective. Levitt's use of repetition of text in diverse musical ways, illustrating both dour acceptance and passionate questioning, is at the least its equal.

Now we come to the similes—"like dry grass," etc. Here we find an unusual and interesting use of descending semitones at *k'tzel over* ("as a passing shadow").

The ending of the composition literally takes one's breath away. The last word, *ya'uf* ("flies away"), is held for an incredible, almost impossible seven full measures—on a pianissimo yet!

The melody's accompaniment is also worthy of mention. It never intrudes, yet it accentuates and aids in the interpretation. Masterful!

Performance of this masterpiece requires dedicated study and preparation. It is not for the faint of heart or weak of voice.

—Abraham Salkov\*

## Book Reviews

*The Music of Israel From the Biblical Era to Modern Times* by Peter E. Gradenwitz. Second Edition, Revised and Expanded. Amadeus Press (133 S. W. Second Avenue, #450, Portland, OR 97204-3527) Pub. 1996. ISBN 1-57467-012-3. 420 pages. \$39.95.

The title of this important study is slightly misleading. It is the story of music of Israel in the sense that Israel is the spiritual homeland of the Jewish people but it encompasses all of Jewish music, examining music from many different countries, nooks and crannies that Jews found themselves throughout their long history. It is also more than a

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history of music. Gradenwitz presents an absorbing investigation of the full scope of Jewish cultural history. Many important developments have occurred in the field of Jewish music during the forty-seven years from when the first edition was published in 1949 and the second edition came out in 1996. The fruits of that research are reported in this greatly revised and expanded new volume. The original edition is 334 pages and the new issue is 472 pages and Gradenwitz has been scrupulous in keeping up with much of the latest research done in the field. It is arranged chronologically with sixteen chapter and three appendices; a chronological table of Jewish general and cultural history, a checklist of important Biblical references to music and musical instruments and a short essay of *Hatikvah*.

The work starts, as one would expect of a survey of Jewish music, in the Ancient world. Music in the Bible and sacred texts is presented in a very thorough manner. The author is not averse to making some rather broad generalizations but since this area of study is so speculative, it really can't be helped. The influence from the Hellenistic and Roman periods is also carefully traced. With the Diaspora and the push West, Jewish music and culture take a new turn, which is explained, in rather intricate detail. Roots of the Sephardic traditions under Moslem rule in Spain and Africa as well as the early stages of the Askenazic traditions are analyzed and the various bibliographic citations are of many recent scholarly studies. Particularly interesting is the discussion on the cross influences between Jewish music and early Christian liturgical music. There has been much work done on the Renaissance period. The portrait of the famous Salomone Rossi, Leone da Modena and other minor players in Italian Jewish cultural circles is well painted. Information on the Bassano family and influence of Jewish musicians in the English Court was completely unknown at the time of the first edition and the present book carefully fills in that information.

It is the modern era in which music plays a dominant role in Jewish cultural life. Gradenwitz states, "The history of the place of the Jews in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European society is responsible for the absence of Jewish musicians in the history of music after the



short and magnificent intermezzo at the court of Mantua..." Indeed, the last 300 pages of the book are concerned with 19th and 20th-century music. The essays on individual musicians of this period is where Gradenwitz is most masterful. For composers such as Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Halévy, and a few other minor musicians, the author not only outlines the major contributions of their careers but also examines the Jewish influence in their lives. That, of course, is a rather subtle task.

The longest chapter in the book, "The Great Call—Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg," is a brilliant examination of those two masters as well as other Jewish musicians who came under their great span of influence. Gradenwitz seems able to see deep into the mysterious personalities of both Mahler and Schoenberg and his analysis is intriguing. Jewishness played a major role in the development of both artists but the relatively few number of years that separated the two men played a decisive role in how they embraced their faith. "Long before the cruel lesson Nazism taught the world that emancipation had not solved the problem of Jewry, it had become clear to Schoenberg that the Jews were in dire need of spiritual rejuvenation..." Of course Schoenberg acted on this impulse with his formal reentry into Judaism in Paris, 1933 and with the creation of his many religious works. Mahler, Schoenberg's creative mentor, was a man more in the cultural grasp of an earlier age and drawn to Catholicism and the lure of emancipation, although never denying his Jewish roots. As with all such situations, great conflict results. Gradenwitz sums it up succinctly when he writes, "In historical as well as in Jewish perspective, Arnold Schoenberg seems to have found the answer to many a question that Gustav Mahler had asked and was unable to solve. Mahler lived in an era that appeared secure on the outside... He delved with his soul and his mind deep into the mysticism of Catholic teachings—but could not gain innermost peace." Schoenberg, though also experiencing the martyrdom of the creative artist who possesses "the courage to follow only his own leanings," gained peace within himself in an epoch that was so much stormier, so much fuller of tragedy than Mahler's."

The chapter, "Trends in Liturgical Music" will be of great in-

terest to readers of this publication. The traditional Hebrew modes are discussed as are other technical aspects of the liturgy. The author also traces the role of the hazzan as well as the stylistic developments in both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions. Most interesting are the changes resulting from non-Jewish musical influences. The contributions of Samuel Naumbourg, Louis Lewandowski and Salomon Sulzer are thoroughly detailed. Writing on the use of sacred texts in relationship to music seems to be the same as the history of Western music itself. However, the chapter, "The Bible in Music," does present a thoughtful overview of this topic. One of the most penetrating points of discussion that appeared in a number of different chapters was the synthesis of Eastern and Western influences. Gradenwitz indicates that this is a central cultural issue throughout Jewish history and occurs in the mix of Western Greek or Roman thought on Eastern Jews, or the tension between Eastern and Western European Jewry or the synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas at play in present day Israel.

In 1949, the War was barely over four years, so, the shock and horror of the greatest calamity in Jewish history was too recent for too close an examination. In his section on music during the holocaust, the author quotes a haunting and terribly fitting line from a great Jewish song writer, Irving Berlin, *The Song is ended but the melody lingers on....* Special attention is paid to the musical activities at Terezin. Gradenwitz pays tribute to the many Jewish musicians who suffered or perished at the hands of the Nazis and by documenting the activities of those brave souls he has helped to preserve some of the noblest human efforts of the Jewish people. Much of the last section of the book is devoted to the musical contributions of major Jewish composers such as Copeland, Bernstein, Bloch, Wolpe, Ben-Haim, in addition to a host of important performers, scholars and lesser composers.

Leonard Bernstein, for whom the 1949 first edition was dedicated and for whom this 1996 edition is dedicated *in Memoriam*, commented in his brief Forward on Peter Gradenwitz's impressive analytical skills and deep scholarly range. Those words of praise from one of our century's greatest musical talents are most deserving and fitting.

—Jeffrey Nussbaum

*Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion* by Michael Marissen. Oxford University Press. 1998. ISBN 0-19-511471-X. 110 pages.

There is a conflict between two sensibilities in the contemporary music world. Authenticity, with its driving force to recreate old music in the spirit, as closely as possible, to its original intent, is at odds with the desire to be sensitive to anti-Semitism expressed in some of our finest repertoire. Much has been published recently regarding this issue of anti-Semitism in music including a thoughtful essay by Lawrence Rosenwald, "On Prejudice and Early Music," *Historical Performance* 5 (Fall 1992) and a number of responses to his essay in that same publication including views by Barbara Thornton and Richard Taruskin. The 1998 Conference of the American Bach Society, held at Yale University, included a performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* performed by the Yale Camerata and the Arcadia Players. Much discussion concerning anti-Jewish feeling in this work was presented during the conference and the program notes of the concert included the views of many distinguished biblical scholars and musicologists including those of Michael Marissen, Associate Professor of Music at Swarthmore College, who tackles this question as it relates to one of Western music's greatest geniuses, Johann Sebastian Bach, and in particular, his *St. John Passion* and comes up with some thought-provoking and hopeful notions.

The book contains a 36-page essay, an annotated literal translation of the libretto, and several appendices including musical examples from eight different current CD recordings of the work and an extensive index of Biblical and other ancient sources. Marissen aims for a middle ground in this debate and focuses not so much on the anti-Jewish sentiment in the New Testament book of John nor on the sometimes rabid anti-Jewish sentiments of Luther and the Lutheran tradition Bach was raised in, but on Bach's own creation and how it differed from the spirit of his time. He contends that both the text he chose and the manner in which he set those words must be understood together in order to fully appreciate Bach's message. It is an analysis of that material that Marissen takes in hand and manages to do so expertly in a manner understandable to those not expert in musicology or Christian

theology. Particularly helpful are the many references to specific CD track numbers of a wide range of recordings that are used to explain various musical points Marissen makes throughout the book.

The essay shows that Bach's view, as expressed through his great masterpiece, is decidedly less anti-Jewish than others of his time. This conclusion is reached through a careful examination of the music and the text that is set. A central theme is the accountability for Jesus' crucifixion. Readers of this journal are well familiar with many of the ugly historical tragedies that resulted from the accusation that the Jews were "Christ killers." Marissen claims that Bach reaches for a different conclusion or more importantly he reaches for a different question. Bach's *St. John Passion* is not interested in the historical question "who killed Jesus?" It is concerned with theological questions about accountability for Jesus' death and the answer Bach seems to reach is not the Jews nor the Romans but all of humanity. Bach borrows liberally from various contemporary German passion settings but it is revealing that he avoids the many anti-Jewish remarks contained in those sources. In those cases, Bach's change of text as well as the effective compositional structure makes this less an anti-Jewish vehicle and more a complex religious work struggling for a universal message.

Michael Marissen fully admits that his book will not settle this complex issue but he does present a solid case that further social, political, musicological, and theological study is needed. He contends that, "the interpretive path could provide the ethically most intelligent way for attempting to reconcile historical and modern concerns." He leaves us with the thought that on future hearings of Bach great masterpiece, the *St. John Passion*, it will be the chorus's *Ruhet wohl* ("be fully at peace") that rings in people's ears. That is certainly a beautiful sentiment and the thoughtful and sensitive exploration Michael Marissen takes in this small book represents a large step in achieving that end.

—Jeffrey Nussbaum\*

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\* Jeffrey Nussbaum is the President and founder of the Historic Brass Society. He is deeply interested in Jewish music and has been a frequent contributor to the Journal of Synagogue Music.

# “Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune”— A Compositional Response to a Rarely Heard Synagogue Melody

*Hazzan Eugene Rosner*

As Hazzanim, we have been taught a vast number of so-called *Mi-Sinai* tunes that to this day, represent—along with the many prayer modes—the core of liturgical music of the synagogue. Because our knowledge of these tunes is unique, it is our sacred responsibility to perpetuate this musical tradition or face the unpleasant possibility that many of these melodies will become extinct. The advent of new *mabzorim* and *siddurim* has only made this task more difficult. In order to streamline these prayer books, many, if not all, families of *piyyutim* have been edited out. Along with those *piyyutim* go the accompanying *Mi-Sinai* tunes. This observation is certainly not new, but the question remains

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as to what can be done to save these melodies.

As a student of the Cantors Institute (1983-1987) I was constantly reminded by my *Nusach* Professors Max Wohlberg ל"ה and Charles Davidson of the need to find places in the liturgy that these *Mi-Sinai* tunes could appropriately be placed and sung regardless of which siddur or mahzor was used. One particular *Mi-Sinai* tune, *tzena ur'ena*, had always mystified me and is the subject of this article. It is this tune that for me stood out above others as a representative of all *Mi-Sinai* tunes that face an unceremonious grave.

"Variations on a *Mi-Sinai* Tune" was first performed on March 9, 1997, by the Beth Hillel/Beth El Synagogue Choir and Chorale and French-Hornist, Paul Rosenberg. It is dedicated to this ensemble and its conductor, Lee Milhous. It is written in memory of Dr. Miriam Gideon, my composition teacher at the Cantors Institute. Many thanks go to Richard Berlin who did the desktop publishing.

*Tzena ur'ena* is a *piyyut* found between *Barchu* and *Shema* (by definition, one of several *Yotzrot*) on the first two days of Passover. Its author is Mordechai Hakatan, an Italian paytan, who was likely related to or worked with Meshullam ben Kalonymus, a more famous paytan of 10th-century Rome. The latter paytan wrote a parallel *yorzer* which is found in the second day liturgy. Each day the same six quotes (*tzena ur'ena*, *binach yafa*, *shinayich*, *k'but hashbani*, *k'migdal david*) from *Shir Hashirim* are used as anchors for the *piyyut*. The remaining text which is interspersed between the quotes varies from day one to day two. The accompanying *Mi-Sinai* tune is one of the most unusual as sung by Hazzan Wahlberg and notated by Hazzan Davidson.

Like many *Mi-Sinai* tunes, *tzena ur'ena* features different musical motives within itself. It begins with a 10 note melisma, its most unusual property being the F# / F# chromatic interplay. The two sets of duple notes immediately causes attention. No other *Mi-Sinai* tune that I know of remotely begins this way. It might be unique in this respect. The two similar sounding cadences (measures 6, 9) approach the G from the dominant D below. The second time though, there is an *appaggiatura* which gives *tzena ur'ena* its second piece of character. Upon first hearing the *piyyut*, it reminded me of the opening theme of Puccini's chamber



work "Chrysantemi" Film fans will know that this theme is used as an "idée fixe" in "Prizzi's Honor."

Getting back to our initial question, I pondered where and how I could incorporate this most unusual melody. I reasoned that if I could find a liturgical spot in the *shacharit* service, I would at least be fulfilling an important *nusach*-related concept; matching music with time and place.

As we are reminded by Hazzan Jack Kessler, in a recent Journal Article (July 1991), the *nusach* currently in practice for the *Shalosh Regalim* has no inherent character until you reach the end of the *shacharit* service *kedusha* (outside, of course, of the opening *Ha-El* passage). Up until this point, the *Shabbat nusach* is used. Hazzan Joseph Levine in his book "Synagogue Song in America," correctly characterizes this as "climbing the liturgical ladder." I thought that replacing a bit of *Shabbat nusach* with a formerly-heard festival *Mi-Sinai* tune would certainly be justified. I came upon the opening words of the *kedusha* and found the pair *n'kadesh et shimcha, ba'olam/az b'kol ra-ash gadol* as a particularly good fit for the whole tune. These two titles can take our melody from measures 1 to 3. Similarly, *k'shem shemakdishim oto bishmei marom/adir v'hazak maskmi-im kol* takes measures 4 to 6 with a repeat of measure 6 for the last two words of each set. Finally, *kakatu al-yad n'viecha/mitnasim l'umat s'raphim* take measures 7 to 9 with a similar repeat for measure 9. The final phrase in each set (*v'kara zeb el zeb v'amar/l'umatom baruch yomeru*) can go back into *nusach* with a short phrase in *Abava Raba* mode. While the above practice satisfied my urge to have this melody heard in synagogue, it seemed to me, that this melody deserves more than just that. To me, *tzenu ur'ena* is not just your typical *Mi-Sinai* tune.

In the Spring of 1996, I once again found myself humming this tune well past *Pesach*. An inner voice called me to write a piece of music based on this *Mi-Sinai* tune. At that moment, I thought there would be no better way of venerating a *Mi-Sinai* tune than by having a piece based on it performed in a concert setting. No sooner did I realize that the idea might be somewhat of an original one. I knew only of one previous tune that was treated to a classical music setting, *Kol Nidre*,



by Max Bruch. Bruch's concert piece is instrumental. Mine would be choral.

There was a problem. Outside of the composition courses I took with Dr. Miriam Gideon מרים, at the Cantors Institute, and the resultant student works, I hadn't done much in the world of composing. I quickly took out my books of exercises, reviewing as much as possible the "correct" practices of 18th and early 19th century music writing and went on my way. "Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune" is intended as a pure piece of music. There is little programmatic quality to it outside of the need to match the temperament of key verses in the text. Outside of the first variation, I was looking for a way to keep the music interesting and varied. I reasoned that if I kept to a standard variation format where the variations are based on the contour and melodic line of the whole melody, the music might bog down. I then chose to base my variations on the different musical motives within the entire tune. There are several.

As this new challenge developed, I wrote down what I thought would be the many musical ideas in the tune. As mentioned earlier, it should be no surprise that a *Mi-Sinai* tune may have several of them. *Mi-Sinai* tunes often have a character of being built up of ideas from several separate *Mi-Sinai* tunes. Often though, it is hard to nail down which motive is really part of which tune! I first began by sketching the tune.

The ten-note opening which begins the first phrase presents a first problem in that it is truly not a western melody. No key suggests itself within the melisma. I then had to take the liberty of metricizing the melody while keeping the quality of the melody as authentic as I could. Before embarking on the variations, I had to decide a few matters. How long and how difficult is this piece to be? What about its structure? While more variations suggested themselves, I decided to keep both length and difficulty at bay in order to make it accessible for most choirs. Following along the similar lines of other composers, I decided on a more lengthy last section. Upon hearing Max Reger's Mozart and Hiller Variations, I strengthened my desire to compose freely based on motivic variations and more importantly, a fugue for the Finale.

After considering an original melody for the fugue subject, I found a better one in "*Hapores Sukkat Shalom*," a *Mi-Sinai* tune from festival evening liturgy. Textually, there is a coincidence. *Tzena ur'ena's* framework is based on the love poetry between God and Israel in Shir Hashirim. In "*Hapores*," God protects Israel with peace. Also, the music happily can be paralleled to the *tzena ur'ena* melody in the major, this being an important device in other works. A chorale-effect results at "*V'al Kol Amo Yisrael*" where the fugue *Mi-sinai* tune is sung in diminution. The following variations are based on the musical motives found in the respective measure numbers:

Variation	Measure
II	2
III	6,8,9
IV	4
V	I

The Soprano Line in Variation III is an elongated version of the motive in part. The repetition of the text in IV is done to reinforce the liturgy the music is based on.

The use of a French Horn was a personal choice albeit a somewhat impractical one. Its part is used as a glue to connect the variations and to keep the music flowing. In the near future, a piano-realization of the horn part might be written for future performance purposes, otherwise a cello might be used as a substitute.

Only part of the *piyyut* was chosen for length of work concerns.

As I was writing the music of "Variations" I was saddened to hear of the death of Dr. Gideon. I feel that it was her great encouragement that inspired me to write this piece. I hope other Hazzanim might have an opportunity to look at other *piyyutim* and their associated *Mi-Sinai* tunes, those especially which are less and less heard, and find ways of singing them again through creative means.

EUGENE ROSNER

**"VARIATIONS ON A MI SINAI TUNE"  
FOR CHOIR AND FRENCH HORN**

**DEDICATED TO  
THE BETH HILLEL-BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CHOIR  
AND CHORALE AND CONDUCTOR LEE MILHOUS**

**DR. MIRIAM GIDEON: IN MEMORIAM**

THEME:	LENTO, LEGATO E QUASI RUBATO
VARIATION 1:	TEMPO I
VARIATION 2:	ANDANTE MODERATO
VARIATION 3:	LARGHETTO
VARIATION 4:	ALLEGRO MOLTO
VARIATION 5:	ADAGIO
FUGUE:	ALLEGRO

**DURATION: 9 MINUTES**

**BASED ON LITURGY AND NUSACH FROM THE FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER**

# Variations on a Mi Sinai Tune

Eugene Rosner 1996

1 Lento (♩ = 60), legato e quasi rubato

Horn in F

*mf*

3

Unison Choir

(1) *mp*

(2)

Tze

- na u - r' - e

6

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

- na

Mas - kil

shir y' - di - dim.

Ri - nat

ha - tu - nat

do - dim.

Hi -

9

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Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

16

19

chek ki-ur-ha-mu-dim Ki-shut l'-shon li-mu-dim K'-hut ha-sha-ni

**Tutti** *mf*

**Tenor** *mf* Ta - am zi - yen y' - li - dim. neg-do shu - lam la - y' - la - dim.

**Bass** *mf* Ta - am zi - yen y' - li - dim. neg-do shu - lam la - y' - la - dim.

21

**Soprano** *mf*

**Alto** *f* K'-mig-dai Da-vid. *mf* Yi

*f* K'-mig-dai Da-vid. *mf* Yi

*f* K'-mig-dai Da-vid. *mf* Yi

*f* K'-mig-dai Da-vid. *mf* Yi

**IL Andante Moderato** (♩ = 90) (2)

23

*p* krat pi - nat y' - so - dim *sf*

*p* krat pi - nat *sf*

*p* krat pi - nat y' - so - dim *sf*

*p* krat pi - nat y' - so - dim *sf*

25

vul ho - ra - yot y' - su-dim Sh' - nei sha - da - yich. Di -

vul ho - ra - yot y' - su-dim Sh' - nei sha - da - yich.

vul ho - ra - yot y' - su-dim. Sh' - nei sha - da - yich. Di -

vul ho - ra - yot y' - su-dim. Sh' - nei sha - da - yich.

27

buk a - chim cha - si dim. L' - ro -

Di - buk A - chim cha - si dim. L' - ro -

buk a - chim cha - si dim. L' - ro -

Di - buk A - chim cha - si dim. L' - ro -

29

im ta - ya - rim ha - su - dum. Ad

im ta - ya - rim Ad

im ta - ya - rim ha - su - dum Ad

im ta - ya - rim Ad



Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

30

*mf*

she - y'a - fu - ach ha - yom.

she - y' - fu - ach ha - yom

she - y'a - fu - ach ha - yom.

31

SOLO: *Molto meno, mosso*

III. *Larghetto* (♩ = 60 (♩/♩))

*p*

2. *pp*

1. *mp*  
2. *p* Yom

1. *p*  
2. *pp* "Ah"

1. *p*  
2. *pp* "Ah"

1. *p*  
2. *pp* "Ah"

35

tz'da - ka la - cha - rei - dim chi - bul



39

zei - dim z - ra - dim. *mp* Ku - lach ya - fa

*p* Ku - lach ku - lach ya - fa

*p* oo Ku - lach ya - fa

*p* oo Ku - lach

44

*rit* *a tempo*

*mp* Ku - lach ya - fa b' - li muu *mf* m' - chu - ba - dim.

*mp* oo m' - chu - ba - dim.

*mp* oo m' - chu - ba - dim.

*mp* oo m' - chu - ba - dim.

48

*mf* Tam v' - chel - ko *mf* m' - zu - ba - dim i - ti mil

*mf* Tam v' - chel - ko *mf* m' - zu - ba - dim i - ti mil

*mp* Tam v' - chel - ko *mp* m' - zu - ba - dim i - ti mil

*mp* Tam v' - chel - ko *mp* m' - zu - ba - dim i - ti mil

Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

52 IV Allegro Molto (♩ = 156) (4)

va-non ka-la *p* *mf* Tze-na ur'-

va-non ka-la *p* *mf* ur'-

va-non ka-la *p*

va-non ka-la *p*

58

e-na mas-kil shir y'-di-dim. Tze-na ur'-

e-na mas-kil shir y'-di-dim. ur'-

*mf* mas-kil shir y'-di-dim.

*mf* mas-kil shir y'-di-dim.

62

e-na ri-nat ha-tu-nat do-dim.

e-na ri-nat ha-tu-nat do-dim.

ri-nat ha-tu-nat do-dim. Tze-na ur'-e na

ha-tu-nat do-dim. ur-e na

57

*poco* *a.* *cresc...* *poco*

*a.* *cresc...* *poco*

dat va - din y' - fi - ku - dim a Tze - na - ur' - e - na ka

*poco* *a.* *cresc...* *poco*

dat va - din y' - fi - ku - dim a Tze - na - ur' - e - na ka

*poco* *a.* *cresc...* *poco*

dat va - din y' - fi - ku - dim a Tze - na - ur' - e - na ka

*poco* *a.* *cresc...* *poco*

dat va - din y' - fi - ku - dim a Tze - na - ur' - e - na ka

71

*Moito meno mosso*

*dim* *ff*

fai ya - chid lif - ku - dim<sup>3</sup> - *ff* hi - nach<sup>3</sup> va fa

fai va - chid lif - ku - dim<sup>3</sup> - *ff* hi - nach<sup>3</sup> va fa

fai va - chid lif - ku - dim<sup>3</sup> - *ff* hi - nach<sup>3</sup> va fa

75 *V. Andagio* (♩ = 68 chit(1)) *mf* *p*

lif - ku - dim<sup>3</sup> - *ff* hi - nach<sup>3</sup> va fa

*mf* *p*

*mf* Vi - ud sh' - chi - na b' - shi - bu -

*mf* Vi - ud sh' - chi - na b' - shi - bu -

*mf* Vi - ud sh' - chi - na b' - shi - bu -

Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

78

*mf* *p*

dim

dim

ra - tzuf b' - vo - o mei-i - bu -

ra - tzuf b' - vo - o mei-i - bu -

ra - tzuf b' - vo - o mei-i - bu -

31

*mf* *p*

li - bav - ti - ni a - cho - ti - cha

*dim.* li - bav - ti - ni a - cho - ti - cha

dim li - bav - ti - ni a - cho - ti - cha

dim

34

*mf* *p*

la

la

la

ha - bat bat n' - gi

ha - bat bat n' - gi

ha - bat bat n' - gi

37

*mf* *p*

*dim*

a - ha - va v' - chi - ba a - gu -

*dim*

a - ha - va v' - chi - ba a - gu -

*dim*

a - ha - va v' - chi - ba a - gu -

*dim*

90

*mf* *p*

*dim*

do -

*dim*

ma ya - fu do -

*dim*

ma ya - fu do -

*dim*

ma ya - fu do -

93

*poco rit.* *Espressivo*

*mp*

da - yich a - cho - ti cha - la

da - yich a - cho - ti cha - la

da - yich a - cho - ti cha - la

da - yich a - cho - ti cha - la

Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

96

*p* "oo"

*p* "oo"

*p* "oo"

*p* "oo"

99 **FUGA: Allegro** (♩ = 130 )

*f* Ha-po-res su -

*f* Ha-po-res su - kat sha-lom a - lei - nu *mf* ha-po -

103

kat sha-lom a - lei nu *mf* ha - po -

res su - kat sha - lom a - lei -



106

Ha - po - res su - kat sha - lom a - lei

res su - kat sha - lom a

nu ha - po - res su - kat sha - lom a

109

Ha - po - res su - kat sha - lom a - lei

nu *mf* ha - po - res su - kat sha - lom a

lei - nu a - lei nu a - lei - nu

lei - nu a - lei - nu a

112

*mp* nu ha - po - res su - kat sha - lom *mf*

lei - nu ha - po - res su - kat

a - lei - nu ha - po - res su

lei - nu *f* ha - po - res su



Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

115

mp *mf* Ha-po - res su - kat

sha - lom a - lei nu ha-po - res su

kat sha-lom a - lei nu Ha - po - res su

kat sha-lom a lei nu

118

*mp* *mf*

- sha - lom a - lei - nu ha-po - res su -

kat sha-lom a - lei - nu a lei - nu *f* ha - po - res su -

kat sha-lom a - lei - nu a - lei - nu

*mf* Ha-po - res su - kat

122

kat sha-lom a - lei - nu *f* ha - po - res su -

kat sha-lom a - lei nu a -

*mf* ha - po - res - su - kat

sha - lom a - lei - nu ha - po - res su -

125

kat sha-lom a - lei - nu a - lei nu a

lei nu a

sha - lom a - lei - nu

kat sha-lom a - lei nu a - lei - nu

128

*Con Tema a Maggiore*

lei - nu *f* ha - po - res su - kar sha-lom a - lei

lei - nu *f* ha - po - res su - kar

*f* Tze - na ur' -

*f* Tze - na u - r' -

132

nu v' - al koi a - mo Yi - sra -

sha - lom v' - al kol a - mo Yi - sra -

e - na v' - al koi a - mo Yi - sra -

e - na mas - kii shiry - di - dim ni - nat ha - tu - nat do -

Variations on a Mi-Sinai Tune

136

el v' - al y' - ru-sha-la - yim dat va-din u - fi - ku - dim ka -  
 el v' - al y' - ru-sha-la - yim dat va-din u - fi - ku - dim ka -  
 el v' - al y' - ru-sha-la - yim v' - al kol a -  
 dim hi-nach ya - fach v' - al kol a -

141

fal ya - chid lif - ku - dim shi na -  
 fal ya - chid lif - ku - dim a -  
 mo Yi - sra - el a -  
 mo Yi - sra - el v' - al y' - ru-sha-la - yim

145

Rit. ....  
 yich a - men - men - men - men

147

Tempo I.

*rit...*

*p* dat va - din u - fi - ku - dim ka

*p* dat va - din u - fi - ku - dim ka

149

*p* shi - na - yich

fal ya-chid lif - ku - dim shi - na - yich

fal ya-chid lif - ku - dim shi - na - yich

152

*f* Tze - na - ur' - e - na.

*f* Tze - na - ur' - e - na.

*f* Tze - na - ur' - e - na.

*f* Tze - na - ur' - e - na.

# Psalm for the New Month

*Hazzan Paul Richards*

## Psalm for the New Month

for Cantor Neil Blumof on the occasion of his installation  
at Congregation Agudas Achim in Austin, Texas, on January the 23rd, 1999

Paul Richards

1 dancing, energetic ( $\text{♩} = 90$ ) *mp* *f* *rall.*

Bar - chi - naf - shi - et A - do -

4 *a tempo* *mf* *f*

nai - A - do - nai - E - lo - hai - ga - dal - ta m' - od, hod v' - ha - dar la -

7 *subdued, lyrical* *p*

vash - ta. O - teh or ka - sal - mah, no - teh sha -

10 *mf* *p poco a poco cresc.*

ma yim ka - y' ri - ah Ham - ka - reh va -

*mf* *p poco a poco cresc.*

14 *(cresc.)*

ma yim a - li yo - tav, ha - sam a - vim r' -

*(cresc.)*

18 *mf*

chu vo, ham - ha - leich al kan - fei ru

*f*

21 *p*

3ch. O - seh mal - a - chav ru - chot,

*p*

# Psalm for the New Month

24 *mf* *f freely*

m-shar-tav cish lo-heit. Ya-sad e-retz al m'-cho-ne-ha, bai ti.

27 *rall.* *a tempo*

mot o - lam va - ed.

29 *dancing, energetic*

*dancing, energetic*

32 *mp*

Y' - hi ch'-vod A-do - nai I' - o-lam yis-



36 *f* *broad, majestic* *mp freely* *mf*

mach A - do - nai b' - ma - a - sav. Ha - ma - bit la - a - retz va - tir - ad - yi -

*broad majestic*

39 *f*

ga be - ha - rim v' - ye - e - sha - nu. A - shi - rah l'A - do - nai b' - cha -

*p* *f*

41 *mf*

yai a - ram - rah l'Ei - lo - hai b' - o - di.

*mf* *p*

44 *p* *pp*

Ye - e - rav a - lav si - chi a - no - chi es - mach b'A - do - nai.

*Psalm for the New Month*

48 *p poco a poco cresc.*

Yi - ta - mu cha - ta - im min ha - a - retz, ur - sha - im od ei -

*p poco a poco cresc.*

51 *f*

nam, bar -

*f* *mf*

54 *f* *rall.* *a tempo* *mf* *f*

chi - naf - shi - A - do - nai - Ha - l' - lu - yah, Ha - l' -

*f* *rall.* *a tempo* *mf* *f*

58 *freely* *poco rit. al fine* *Fine*

lu - yah

*freely* *poco rit. al fine* *Fine*